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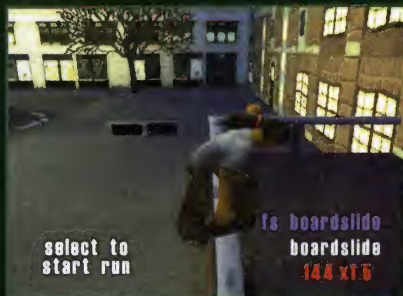
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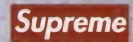
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20 UPDATE

We've got gripping PlayStation news from around the world, and we've got it all here for your enjoyment. Read all about the PlayStation 2 launch, protesters at Midway's head office, brand new games under development, exclusive interviews with the makers of Spiderman and DJ Antman, and much much more!

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30 COMPETITIONS

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32 EYE ON PLAYSTATION 2: RIDGE RACER V

It is only going to be a matter of months before the PlayStation 2 hits our shores, so each month, we will be bringing you an in-depth look at each of the hot titles on offer, complete with all the jaw-dropping eye candy you've been craving for. This month: Ridge Racer V!

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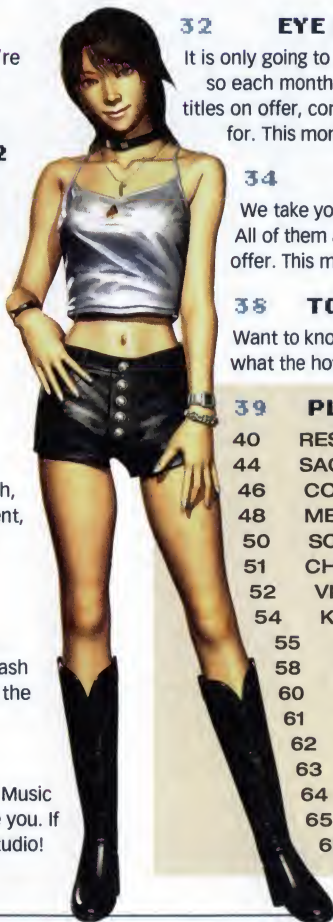
We take you behind the scenes to the most exciting games on the horizon. All of them are carefully hand-picked by us for the potential they have to offer. This month, the titles include Parasite Eve 2 and Vampire Hunter D.

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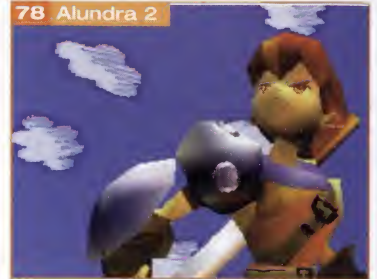
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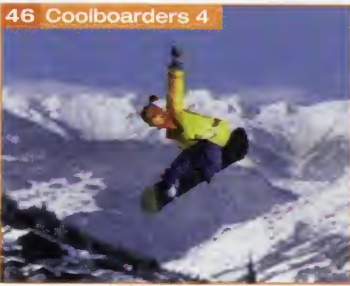
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68 MODERN ENTERTAINMENT

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A listing of all the best games available on the market, complete with a brief description and rating to make your PlayStation shopping all that much easier.

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This month, we discuss the problems of commerce invading the world of art.

98 NEXT EDITION

The Station's own crystal ball. Take a sneak peak at some of the cool things you'll find in next month's issue of Australian Station.

OUR PROMISE TO YOU!

Australian Station's mission is simple: to provide you with the best. We're beyond hyperbole and exaggeration: our oath is simply to provide honest, unbiased, accurate, up-to-date and uncompromising information about your PlayStation. As an unofficial magazine, we have no other interest other than to see the readers served, which is why we don't settle for betas or articles taken directly from overseas publications; and it's why we will always be able to show the big picture better than any other magazine. We are the real deal, and we are at your service.

KEVIN CHEUNG
EDITOR



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We all think Ai Fukami looks like a bit of a skank. What does everyone else think?



2D RPGs return with sex appeal, charisma and a headstrong vengeance

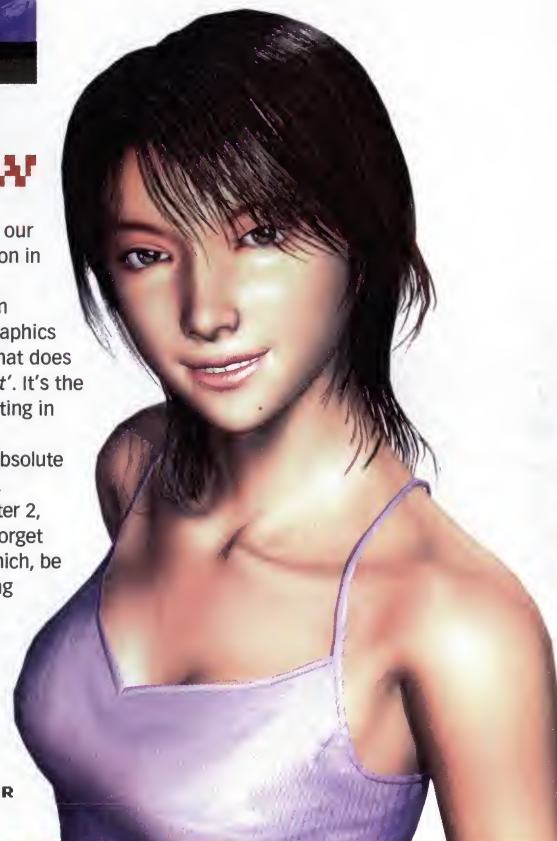
OVER THE RAINBOW

It is an exciting time to be in the industry right now. By the time you read this, our gaming brothers and sisters in Japan will be experiencing the next phenomenon in interactive entertainment: the PlayStation 2. In less than a year, the rest of the world at large will be able to as well. On paper alone, the PlayStation 2's system specs are epic-making. Over 60 million polygons per second. State-of-the-art graphics effects. DVD compatibility. 150% the processing speed of Sega's Dreamcast. What does this mean for the average consumer? It means 'totally immersive entertainment'. It's the complete entertainment unit - be it music, movies, or mind-blowing games - sitting in your own home.

In the meantime, Sony are still going strong with the PlayStation, offering the absolute best games that money can buy. This month, for instance, there's SaGa Frontier 2, Vigilante 8: Second Offence, Guilty Gear, as well as upcoming titles like Syphon Filter 2, Medievil 2, Final Fantasy IX and a plethora of other exciting new titles. And don't forget Sony's big release to kick off the new millennium: Gran Turismo 2! Speaking of which, be sure to check out our bonus booklet with a bumper 64-pages' worth of cars, driving tips and strategies to get you through the game.

So there you have it, folks. We've got our trusty PlayStations to amply satisfy our gaming needs and we've got the PlayStation 2 looming on the horizon for all of our future needs. And then there's us: the Australian Station crew, here to help you navigate through everything you might encounter in Planet PlayStation. With a game plan like this, it's no wonder Sony's competition is floundering.

KEVIN CHEUNG
EDITOR



MEET THE AUSTRALIAN STATION TEAM

What new peripherals would you like to see?



Kevin Cheung

I'd like to see a virtual punching bag for fighting games. It'd be a great way to relieve stress and I'd probably stop kicking holes through the wall.



Hillous Lesslie

Jump leads! Attach them to whichever part of your body you desire and then receive a nasty yet invigorating shock for every misdeed.



Chantal Bairle

A sensor chair, like in the Lawnmower Man, so the movement of any limb could be translated as a command into the game you're playing.



James Cottee

Some kind of full-body rubber suit that would electrically stimulate your nerves to emulate the feeling of pain or pleasure!



Amos Wong

I want a portable PlayStation! I need something I can carry around like a laptop with a built-in TV and detachable infrared control pads.



Keith Talent

A PSX microphone peripheral. That would open the road to new karaoke games and we can all listen to my beautiful voice.



ON THE CD COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2

Get into the awesome demo on your free CD, complimentary with your issue of Station!

Station Magazine isn't the best PlayStation magazine for nothing. Each month, we bring you the best news, the best games analysis in our reviews... plus you also get a free demo CD!

This month, feast your eyes on what will undoubtedly be the toast of the rally racing community: *Colin McRae Rally 2*. Building on the success of the best-selling original game, which brought a new sense of realism to racing games on the PlayStation, *Colin McRae 2* will be striving to achieve brand new heights of excellence and excitement in four-wheeled fun.

Sporting massively improved graphics and brand new cars and tracks, it goes without saying that this will again take the crown for being the best rally title. Forget V Rally 2, Nevermind the non-dedicated rally mode in Gran Turismo 2.

Colin McRae is the no-nonsense pure concentration white-knuckled rally game you've been looking for. It won't take long for you to realise what an incredible game it is.



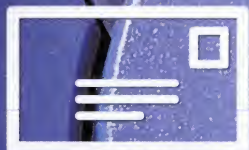
For starters, take a look at how the cars move. Each of the wheels have independent suspension, which makes for more realistic movement, sliding, weight transfer, and momentum. Couple that with the tracks, which are based on real locations from around the world, and you've got a pretty damned realistic game - if not THE most realistic rally game anywhere.

And for those of you who are into rally racing, don't forget this is the game where CM tossed aside his Subaru in favour of the Ford Focus, which many are saying is capable of running loops around the old WRX! Groovy. So get into the awesome *Colin McRae Rally 2* demo. Watch it. Try it. Like it. Buy it. And show it to your friends. Also, to complete your preview gaming fun for the month, don't forget to check out the other amazing goodies we have on offer in this month's demo disc.





FEEDBACK



This is where the most important people in the gaming universe (you) get to voice their opinions about games. Send in your comments, concerns and complaints to:

FEEDBACK

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Also, each Letter of the Month will win an amazing DUAL FORCE STEERING WHEEL from Livewire!



Platinum Tekken 2



Platinum Crash Bandicoot 2

Platinum is best

Dear Station Magazine, I read Simon Walsh's letter in issue 8, and even though I know that piracy is evil, I can see where some of these people are coming from. I can't afford a PlayStation game costing \$80 or more and I see that's why people copy games and buy mod chips. That's why I wanted to write across to say what great value the Platinum games are.

Since my weekly allowance is \$10, I always save up for Platinum games, and so does my best mate. Our collection includes Gran Turismo, Die Hard, Tekken 2, Crash Bandicoot, and Crash Bandicoot 2 (my favourite game). I think that if brand new games were priced at

Poverty and greed are two ingredients to criminal activity. But greed goes both ways, depending on how you see the pricing of new games. A case of "evil begets evil", perhaps? Piracy is one of the hot issues now since the PSX 2 has to build industry confidence that it can't be easily pirated, if at all.

Sure, it's a proprietary right that's being protected, but can't they think of alternative methods that might sacrifice a little of their profits, but nevertheless achieve the desired result? Your suggestion sounds like one, James. And it would make more people happy too.

Lawnmower Man

Dear PlayStation Gods, I have got this awesome idea for how to promote the PlayStation 2. Why don't Sony get someone to dress up in a Crash Bandicoot suit and ride a charity marathon all around the country on a bike or a lawn mower?

Crash could stop at shopping centres and schools, spread the good word about the PlayStation 2, and eventually round up at the Sydney Olympic Stadium in time for the Opening Ceremony! It would be so cool!

Adam Matthewson

And remember kids, drugs kill.

Platinum game range in future.

James Clarke

Gauge

Gaming's not just for guys! We should all embrace the finer sensibilities of 'equality'.

Sensitive gamers!

Dear PlayStation Team, I love your mag and currently own all of your 'new' issues. I'm a 15 year old guy and I own a PlayStation. I am a huge Final Fantasy fan and I'm advising others not to take offence to the letter from the Final Fantasy VII hater in issue 8.

That letter was purely opinionated and should not be taken notice of. I loved the FF8 Playtest except for when it said Square was targeting a sensitive female audience instead of a macho, bash-happy audience. Men can be equally as sensitive as women and can also look for the same in a game as any girl. I've got a few questions to ask:

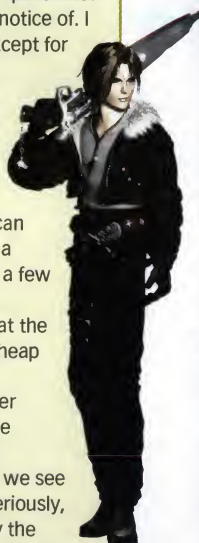
1. Would you think that the PlayStation 2 will be as cheap as the PSX today?
2. Will there be another Final Fantasy game on the PlayStation 2?
3. Will this be the last we see of Lara Croft? Because seriously, all of these guys who buy the Tomb Raider series just to perve on her don't realise that they can see a lot more just by going down town on a Saturday afternoon.

Irvine

Spoken in the words of a mature and rational gamer. True, in this age where men and women supposedly live in a state of total equality - or at least are striving for it - men are just as entitled to enjoy a game for its sensitive angle as a woman is.

Funny that a woman can slap a man in the face in public and a man cannot... but we'll leave that aside. It is unfortunate that the game should have been marketed that way, but perhaps one day, games will be designed without such black and white concepts of masculinity or femininity in mind.

1. It's entirely possible, but we're talking many years from now.
2. Yes. Final Fantasy IX is currently planned to be released on the PlayStation.
3. I think we all know the answer to your question. What's more interesting, is your observation of the kind of 'appeal' the game relies on. Sure, it's technically a great platformer, but is it right to encourage impressionable minds to have a perve?





Tekken 4 hopes

Hi Guys,
I just need some answers to my questions. Anyway, I rate your magazine 10/10. If you don't know the answer, you can just write "I don't know!"

1. Will Eddy Gordo be in Tekken 4?
2. Do you know the third warrior in Tenchu 2?
3. In Point Blank 2, is there a Quest Mode?
4. Is Unholy War any good?
5. When is Bust A Groove 2 out?
6. Does Tobal 1 and 2 suck?

Angelo Sugon

1. As of this writing, Tekken 4 hasn't even been confirmed as being in development. However, he'll be in Tekken Tag Tournament, which will be the series' next installment on the PSX 2.

2. The third ninja's name is Tatsumaru. He is Rikimaru's 'sempai', which is a traditional term for a mentor or 'big brother'.

3. Yes.

4. It's a strategy/action game much like the old Archon games. Basically, it's a game of chess. When two pieces come head to head, you are thrown into a real-time battle. Not bad, but not brilliant.

5. The original Bust A Groove didn't do too well in the local markets, and considering all the licensing loops Sony had to jump through with Enix to distribute the game, it is very unlikely for it to come out.

6. The Tobal series is perhaps the most innovative combat game ever made for the PlayStation next to Bushido Blade. It's unfortunate that its success was overshadowed by the presence of the Tekken games, but no... they don't suck.

Pokemon, anyone?

Dear Station Magazine,
I was wondering if you could make a Pokemon game like Tekken. Because if you could, it would be so cool.

And if you do, after you battle your pokemon it should evolve. And at the top of the screen, you could have the pokemon's health, the level that it has grown to, and how many you have left.

And you should have different pokemon modes as well, just like Tekken's Force Mode, and in that mode, you should be able to catch more secret pokemon that

LETTER OF THE MONTH

This month's winner receives a Dual Force Steering Wheel!



Dull Kill

To Station,
I just wanted to say to all you gore junkies out there that just because a game has a whole lot of violence in it doesn't mean it's going to be any good. I have played Thrill Kill and I admit that it was a bit of fun to begin with, but after two minutes I realised what a pathetic game it was.

Take Mortal Kombat 4 for another example. It's one of the worst and most boring games I've ever played and if you took away the violence it would be even worse. So to any developers who want to make some money, my advice is to make something original and innovative and not just some tasteless gory fighting game that plays like busted arse.

Anon



Your views are shared by practically all of us. Gratuitous violence will always be shown for what it is eventually. What is surprising, though, is that in spite of all of the pressures of political correctness, these kinds of games still manage to pop up from time to time. Maybe some people need giant gobs of gore to get their escape from everyday life.



you can use in the normal game. And you could battle with other trainers and gyms and get the badges and go all the way to the top of the Pokemon League!

Tim Corbett

Erm... We don't make videogames. We just write about them in this magazine. But Pikachu is a mouse, right? We've heard that deep-fried mouse is a rather tasty treat, but we doubt that'll be of any help to you.

Profanity in South Park?

Dear Station people,
In the TV series of South Park, they censor out everything. But in the movie, you hear every single rude word from "Uncle *****" to "German scheizer films". I don't even know what a scheizer is. But anyway, do you think that since they didn't censor it all out in the movie that they won't censor it out in the videogame?

Fat Cartman Fan





Command and Conquer: Tiberian Sun. How long are we going to wait?



It's not you. I just prefer guys

Acclaim haven't confirmed anything yet in terms of a South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut videogame. And even if you do, it's unlikely for it to be "uncut". Speaking with such a potty mouth isn't good for you either.

Say it three times, and it might come true

To Station Mag,
I ALWAYS buy your totally awesome mag and I always intend to. Do you know whether Command and Conquer Tiberium Sun will come out on the PlayStation? Or any other Command and Conquer games? As you can probably guess, I am a huge fan of Command and Conquer.

Chris Wade

Westwood have a fairly consistent record for bringing out the C&C titles to PlayStation, in spite of the long delays of converting the game from PC to PlayStation. While the chances are good, the game is still pretty new in PC terms, so it will be a while before we hear anything about a PlayStation version.

There is no spoon

Hey Guys and Gals,
I think your mag is great! Good price, excellent quality, and a demo CD to boot! Anyway, I've got a few questions.

1. Are they ever going to make a game of the awesome movie, The Matrix?
2. My friend gets pirate CDs. I tell him it's illegal, but he says it isn't unless money is involved. Is this true?
3. Why are games going up in price lately? Is it because of piracy?
4. Have you seen the cover art for Soul Reaver? It looks really cool! Is it worth buying? I need a game that will last me for more than a month.

Chris

that The Matrix 2 is also on the drawing boards. We don't want to speculate too much, but gawd it would be glorious...

2. Bollocks. The simple act of copying a piece of software (with a couple of limited exceptions) is illegal. Your friend is kidding himself.

3. Well, you can blame practically anything on inflation...

4. Yeah - the 3D artwork's sick, as is the game itself. It's still one of Hillous' fave games at the moment.

The dearly converted

Dear Station Magazine,
I am a first-time reader. I used to read another PlayStation magazine, and I was aware of your magazine many months ago, I foolishly believed that an 'independent magazine' such as yourselves wouldn't be capable of "knowing what you were talking about". I was wrong.

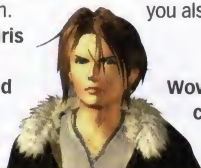
But the last straw for me in the magazine I used to read was a ridiculous piece about some obscure celebrity being dressed in a \$1000 costume of Squall Leonheart. That's when it clicked in my head that only a total loser would get into something like that.

Thankyou for rekindling my faith in videogames and injecting a little sanity into the discourse on the industry. You people not only understand games, but you also never lose sight of 'real life'.

Angus McKimson

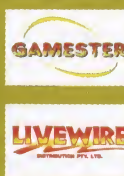
1. A Matrix game is rumoured to be on the discussion tables right now, along with talk

Wow... thanks for the compliment. We will keep on trying our best!



FREAKY QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Throw a sharp query at us and you could win one of these →

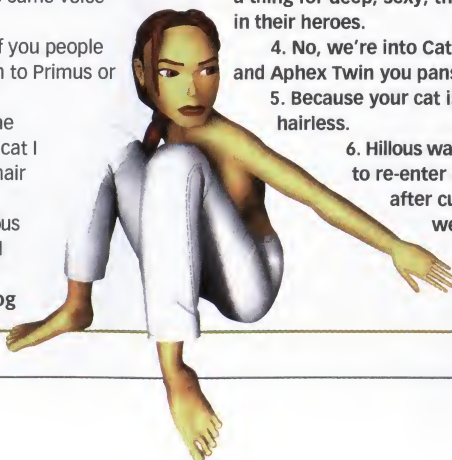


Here kitty kitty kitty

Dear Station,
Please answer these important questions as they aid me in my quest for knowledge.

1. Will there be another Tomb Raider game, because aren't people getting sick of them yet?
2. What are Lara's measurements?
3. Do Gabriel Logan and Solid Snake have the same voice-over guy?
4. Do any of you people at Station listen to Primus or Fear Factory?
5. How come when I lick the cat I don't hack up hair balls at all?
6. Does Hillous have any mental problems at all?

Mini Mog



Gauge

Why can't everyone and their systems just get along? Let the whinging commence.



A general system war whinge

Dear Station Magazine,
I am ten years old and my name is Dan Pumphrey, and I have got a bone to pick with all the Nintendo heads out there. They all rant on about Nintendo having its 64-bit graphics and blah blah blah. But who cares? I mean, look at all the games the PlayStation has compared to the Nintendo 64. It's like trying to compare Gran Turismo with Mario Kart. Can't they see that Nintendos suck?

I don't know if I should even write the word Nintendo with a capital N - I don't think it deserves the distinction of being a proper noun. Now please excuse me - I have to play Metal Gear Solid now.

Dan Pumphrey

If there's any rule that universally applies to anything, it's that variety is the spice of life. And with videogames, the technology behind a console can only take you so far. It's the games that make a console successful. By that reasoning, it's very easy to see how the PlayStation is preferable to the Nintendo 64.

However, it would be a grave mistake to discount Nintendo's contribution to the industry. Nintendo was the company that salvaged what everyone thought was a commercially dead industry back in the early eighties, and it was partly through sheer perseverance on their part that the industry is where it is today.



Decisions decisions...

Dear Station,
I have got a problem. I bought my PlayStation last year for my birthday. I was going to get an N64, but I was \$10 short of cash. Now that my next birthday is coming up, I was wondering if I should get a PlayStation 2 or a Dreamcast.

I am really keen on Dreamcast. My friend said that he ordered one off the Internet, and he has three games on it as well. Should I keep my PlayStation? Will it be worth more in the future? Or should I sell it now?

Jamie Ryan

A game console is always a big purchase, whether it's your birthday or not. You never want to go around spending huge wads of cash on something only to discover there was something better just around the corner. For what it offers, the Dreamcast is undeniably a very expensive item. You'd be better off waiting a couple of months until the PlayStation 2 is released (not long now!) before you make your decision.

As for your other question, the value of videogames unfortunately do not fluctuate in the same way that comic books, basketball cards, or Pokemon cards do. They just get old, out of date, and

are eventually forgotten. On the other hand, many of us still enjoy the odd game on our crusty old C64s, Amigas and NESes.

Dude, you're gonna bleed

Dear Station Magazine,
The other day I hired Crash Team Racing and as usual I made a "backup copy". When I put in my PlayStation I was shocked to find the copy didn't work! I think it's time the developers pulled their pants up and improved the copy-ability of their games or pirates like me will stop buying or hiring their games.

And to all those whining bastards out there who complain about our business - all we pirates do is try to make a living (and a small profit) and we don't need scumbags like you making us look like petty criminals. Yours Angrily,

Weasel

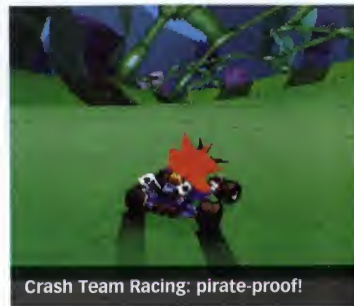
On the general scale of things, there's rock bottom, followed by 10 feet of human excrement, and then there's you. You are a petty criminal. If you think you're being judged unfairly, then try taking up a profession where you're not taking advantage of other people's hard work.

I've got two left feet!

Dear Station Magazine,
What is the big rage over Bust A Groove? I was thinking of buying it but my friend had a copy of it and it drove me crazy! It wouldn't work when I pressed the buttons to dance, and it kept zooming in on the computer character so I couldn't see what I was doing. It should be my player that I see the most! I hated it. If anyone is thinking of buying it, don't.

Jarred Mahon

Cripes. You have managed to get a violently negative reaction from every



Crash Team Racing: pirate-proof!

member of the editorial staff. Even Chantal. The thing is, Bust A Groove is about listening to the music.

It's about getting into the rhythm, and using your ears as your guide to playing the game. That's how many of us can so easily press the buttons in time with the music, and unless you do that, the camera's never going to swing back around to you. Do give it another shot.

The female fox

Hey there guys!
Vixen here. I was just wondering if anyone has noticed how good the graphics are getting on the PlayStation. Much better than I thought it would get! Keep it up Sony!

And guys (which I presume you are - wink wink), keep up the primo mag work for all us PlayStation addicts. Reading your mag seems to be the only way to get us off our PlayStations! Also, I reckon that V-Rally 2, Gran Turismo and Need For Speed 4 are the best racing games ever made. I love racing games just as much as guys do. Quentin reckons you should get Sony to make a Bathurst game. That would ROCK THE STREETS!

I prefer games like Silent Hill, Syphon Filter, Resident Evil 1 2 and 3, and Soul Reaver. And to all the girls that seem to whinge about Lara Croft because of her rather large breasts - get a life! I think it's great to have a female hero to watch on the PlayStation, instead of those muscly males you always seem to see. Oh yeah, a couple of questions for you guys:

1. Do you have cheats for Silent Hill?
2. How do you get the cheats for WWF Attitude?
3. How do you keep cheats for Driver?
4. Any suggestions for cool games?

Well thanks guys, and keep up the primo work!

Vixen Fox

Hmm... who's Quentin? We publish numerous cheats every month, as well as the odd playguide. We've actually covered all of those games in our previous issues, so go back and have a look!



Repeat after us: "Bust A Groove is cool" "Bust A Groove is funky" "Bust A Groove is..."





PlayStation Update

NEWS AND INFORMATION

All the astonishing events that will affect your PlayStation world



These breath-taking images, normally only seen in pre-rendered art, will now be controlled directly by us

PlayStation 2 launched in Japan

New century, new millennium, and new games!



By the time this mag hits the streets, the most powerful home video game system ever made will be available in Japan. Boasting specs and games that the competition can only dream of matching, early stocks are expected to vanish within hours of going on sale. Popular launch titles will include Tekken Tag Tournament and Ridge Racer V,

with Gran Turismo 2000 hot on their heels. More than a mere game console, the *PlayStation 2* can also play DVDs out of the box, and promises networking and movies-on-demand facilities within two years.

It's just under a year before the *PlayStation 2* is launched in Australasia, but local PlayStation enthusiasts are already looking across the gulf of NTSC/PAL incompatibility, casting envious eyes towards the future that already exists in land of the rising sun. Still, the wait will be more than worthwhile.

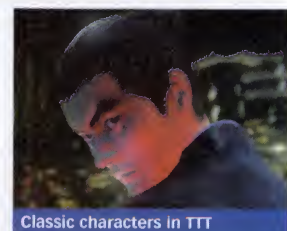
Versions of Syphon Filter, Oddworld, Wipeout

and other PlayStation favourites are being coded for the *PlayStation 2* as we go to press, adapting familiar themes to the vastly increased resolution, smoothness and realism of the soul of the new machine.

To speak nothing of the games presently being dreamed up that are so entertaining they were technically impossible until now. By the time you read this, we should have a



Will FMVs become no more?



Classic characters in TTT

PlayStation 2 of our own, and in the coming months we will be covering all the hot new games to come out of Japan.

While undoubtedly a good thing, The *PlayStation 2* has hardly been free of controversy. The practice of integrating a DVD player with a video game machine is still an unproven economic model; and

this hybrid, designed to merge the two markets, could instead drive them apart. Similarly, the concept of the "set top box," integrating TV, video, cable and internet in one package has been tried before, and is historically prone to failure.

Regardless, time and technology march on, and if Sony have played their cards right, the 21st century could belong to them.



Unreal Tournament!!!

PlayStation 2 licensing floodgates to be opened by Unreal Tournament



I'm on your side you idiot!



The Incredible Ribbon Gun

Epic Megagames made a packet on the PC with its one-two marketing combo: first develop a killer game that sells like hotcakes (Unreal), then license the game engine on to hordes of eager developers so that their games can look just as good. It now looks like Epic are about to repeat this coup on the PlayStation 2.

Once they have completed *Unreal Tournament* for Sony's new console, the resultant PlayStation 2 UT engine will be made available for third



party developers to make their jobs easier. For a price, of course.

For a company that made its name in the alien world of PC gaming, the move to PlayStation 2 appeals for a number of reasons.

From a purely technical standpoint, the fact that all PlayStation 2 will have similar hardware configurations to PC is a boon.

PCs are cobbled together from different

proprietary components, and the various game developers spend an inordinate amount of time trying to make sure that their games work on the infinite number of possible hardware combinations.

More importantly for gamers, though, is the fact that emerging capabilities for internet access and mass

storage will give an *Unreal Tournament* player on the PlayStation 2 all of the options available to their PC gaming friends- online play, and even the ability to download many new levels, skins and themes for the game.

Like the PlayStation before it, the PlayStation 2 will demand coding in C and

assembly language to take maximum use of its resources. Many of the developers will flock to take advantage of an existing development environment that saves them the labour-intensive rigours of low-level programming. This will mean many more games, and a whole new range of choices for the consumer.



Unreal Tournament is such a popular game that it's considered in many circles to be better than Quake 3

Squaresoft's new racer simulates car and driver

Peer inside the workings of a truly innovative PlayStation 2 racer

Squaresoft are developing a racing game as their first in-house software title for the PlayStation 2. Tentatively titled *Driving Emotion Type-S*, the racer will be a unique Square take on the staid world of car racing. Like any other driving game you will be able to select from a number of current models from well known brands like Toyota, Nissan and Subaru.

But *Type-S* differs in the realism it delivers, modelling the motive force of the car through its drive train as delivered to the wheels. You'll also be able to see inside the car and bear witness to the actions of the driver and passengers as they wrestle with the controls and bump their heads on the roof when you bottom out.

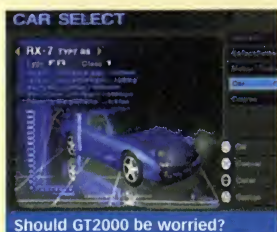
Most interesting of all is the fact that the different cars will elicit different performances depending on the driver they



The closest game the Dreamcast has is Sega GT: Homologation Special >>



Sega GT will have a mini-game for its memory card called "Homo Pocket"



Should GT2000 be worried?



Wow! Photorealistic!

have been assigned. This is reminiscent of the mechanics of another Square classic, *Bushido Blade*, where you would choose both your fighter and the weapon he or she used.

Type-S, like all the other ambitious simulators in the works for PlayStation 2 will take

advantage of the PlayStation 2's specialised physics modeling hardware, keeping track of weight, wind resistance, suspension and so forth. *Type-S* is scheduled for a second quarter release this year, but any plans for a PAL version are as yet unknown.

Exclusive Spiderman Interview

We ensnare the game's creators to get some info...

Dissatisfied with having to wait for the finished product, the ever impatient Hillous decided to take matters into his own hands. Having found Kevin Mulhall (producer) and Chad Findley (lead designer) of Neversoft Entertainment, he threw a few questions their way...

STATION>> Will the Spiderman game follow any set comic book storylines or will it take its own course of events?

NEVERSOFT>> There is an original story being written for the game that will take on it's own course of events (based on of well known Spidey storylines).

S>> What kind of music will accompany the game?

N>> The music is going to be all original pieces by Tommy Tallarico Studios (Wild 9). There will be event-based music as well as dynamic in-fight music.

S>> Does Peter Parker have a role in the game? Is it all played out as Spidey?

N>> The user will always be controlling SpiderMan. However, there will be specific plot points in the cut scenes that unveil Peter Parker.

S>> Do Venom, Kingpin, The Green Goblin or any of the other arch villains make appearances in the game?

N>> Many classic Spidey bad guys make appearances. There are also cameo appearances by some other Marvel characters like Black Cat and the Lizard.

S>> What about Aunt May and Mary Jane?

N>> One of them will most definitely play a part in the story of the game.

S>> Probably the one with all of the sex appeal. Will there be any full motion video sequences?

N>> The story will be told through in-game events as well as full motion video using in-game created assets.

S>> You can use Spidey's self-invented web to swing from building to building. Can it be used to ensnare bad guys, retrieve objects or anything else?

N>> SpiderMan's webbing is used a lot in the game for both mobility and defending against enemies. There are quite a few different things Spidey can do with his webbing in the game.

He can use his trap webbing which shoots webbing around the enemy; he can use his dome web which creates a shield out of webbing to protect against enemies; he can use his impact webbing which shoots a ball of webbing at enemies; and he can use his spike hands which are made from the webbing to inflict more damage on enemies in hand-to-hand combat. Besides swinging with his webbing, Spidey can shoot straight up to the ceiling in enclosed areas of the game with another simple button press.

S>> Will Spidey's spider sense be replicated in the game in some way, kind of like the 'KI' meter in Tenchu: Stealth Assassins?

N>> We aren't using any sort of meter to interpret the Spider Sense. Instead, when SpiderMan is near any unseen trouble, his Spider Sense will be triggered. This is shown as an on screen effect, a specific Spider Sense sound, and if the user is playing with a Dual Shock controller, the controller will shake and aware the user of danger. The Spider Sense will also help Spidey when he is trying to find his way through certain locations. It will be more of an event based



Spiderman is being produced by the same company that brought you Tony Hawk Skateboarding

thing to allow for more action in the gameplay.

S>> How closely is the Manhattan skyline being reproduced? Will there be any landmarks?

N>> A few landmarks have been placed in the game, but they are mostly Marvel landmarks (Daily Bugle, Freedom Plaza).

S>> Will there be motor traffic in the city?

N>> Spidey will not make his way through the city on ground level. The villains behind the master plan in the game have created a fog that has covered the city. This fog is going to allow the villains to carry out their plan. So, Spidey plays across building

tops and in the sewers, but never on city streets.

S>> Will Spidey have to make use of tools, equipment or foreign objects, or will it just be up to his own legendary self to save the day?

N>> There are a few scenarios where Spidey will have to figure out what to use and what to do in order to get past the level. Most of the time, it's only his legendary self.

S>> Will the player get to complete missions at night, or during the day, or in rain, sun or snow?

N>> The game progresses through both night and day... but no rain or snow.

S>> What's the plot?

N>> Clear your name and then save the world.

S>> Is the whole game set in the one cityscape?

N>> The game will take you through all parts of New York city... across building tops, through the New York sewer system, in the Daily Bugle, and more.

S>> Have the Dual Shock's thumbsticks been employed for the game? If so, is movement with the sticks proportional or digital?

N>> The left thumbstick is employed, however it is only

using digital information for Spidey's movement.

S>> Camera control is one of the most difficult hurdles in the development of a 3D game such as Spiderman. What's it like? Can Spidey look around at will? While doing other things?

N>> The camera has been set to provide some very action oriented angles. The user has got the ability to move the camera to directly behind SpiderMan at all times by tapping the L1 button. You can also go into the look around mode by holding the L1 button. You can target enemies and shoot your webbing while in look around mode.

S>> How good is he at hand-to-hand combat?

N>> SpiderMan has got multiple attacks for hand-to-hand combat. There are also some combo attacks, and grab moves, which help bring out more excitement with the hand-to-hand combat.

S>> Will we see any alternate Spidermans from parallel universes? Will the player control the real Peter Parker Spiderman or is he the clone?

N>> There may be some of the alternate SpiderMan costumes hidden around in the game, but only as game cheats. The player will always be in control of the real Spidey.





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Epic Final Fantasy Announcement

Square reveal plans for Final Fantasy 9, 10 and 11



Check issue 4 of Australian PlayStation - we were right on the money!

At the Square Millennium show held recently in Japan, Squaresoft put on display the first official images from the next three games in their award-winning series. Formally announced for the first time were *Final Fantasy IX*, *X* and *XI*, revealing Square's RPG strategy for the next 2 years.

Final Fantasy IX will indeed be the final Final Fantasy game for the PlayStation, and as a tribute to the decade long history of the series, the characters within it will return to the SD proportions of their forebearers. Super deformed, or SD for short, is a very Japanese way of representing cartoon characters, with their

proportions exaggerated so they have little bodies and big heads. *Final Fantasy IX* will also harken a return to a pure fantasy setting, as opposed to the cyberpunk look in *VII* and *VIII*, as well as boasting an improved combat system where up to four parties may join the same battle.



FF will be going back to its roots

Final Fantasy X will be exclusively for the PlayStation 2, and will appear early in 2001 for the new machine. The character designs will swing back in favour of the realistic look pioneered in *FFVIII*, and will feature online support for



downloading new game info, hints and strategies. *FFXI* - Online Another World, coming out in late 2001, will allow users to play over the internet, interacting in a fantasy world like *Ultima Online* or *Everquest*.

In Japan, Square will found a new online gaming network called Play Online Service, which will support the game and supply for downloads upgrades and add-ons that will follow. Note that these are the rough dates these games will appear in Japan, and translation into English and Conversion to PAL will retard their local release by up to a year. So, if we're lucky, we'll get *FFIX* by Christmas, *FFX* by Christmas 2001, and *FFXI* by Christmas 2002.

Mini News



500 GP. Not Hang On

500 GP, a motorcycle racing game Namco has been developing for the PlayStation 2, has been moving through its development schedule so smoothly that it's now expected to be a launch title for the consoles release in Japan this March. Presumably the racing title will be different to Namco's other speedway champion *Ridge Racer 5* to allow them to co-exist in the marketplace. Both *Ridge Racer 5* and *500 GP* were displayed at the Japan PS2 Showcase last month.

Retail chains in America are taking pre-orders for the PSX 2, a full six months before its launch. The projected cost and release date of the unit varies, but the approximate launch date seems to be October 1st, and the cost of the new machine is most likely to be US\$399, though one more aggressive retailer is pitching it at US\$299. In terms of exchange rates, this fits in with suspicions that down here it will sell for about six or seven hundred of our local groats.

The battle for Christmas dollars in 2000 is looking to be a bloody spectacle, with at least two new DVD-based game machines to be released alongside the PSX 2. Microsoft's "X-Box" console continues its clandestine gathering of development interest for what is essentially a stripped-down PC clone. More interesting is VM Labs' "Nuon," a technology to be embedded in new DVD players to make them double as next-gen consoles, and which could launch overseas as early as March.

Commit the crime of the century

Why you would even want to steal a Picasso is beyond us...

The genre of grand art theft is making a comeback. Games such as *Grand Theft Auto* (and all its sequels), *Driver* and even *Tenchu: Stealth Assassins* to a certain extent must have made an impression in some developer's minds as the emergence of this ingenious would-be title.

While at the cinemas Sean Connery and Pierce Brosnan are introducing a new generation to the world of gentleman thieves who steal priceless works of art from the ultra-rich, one British game developer is preparing a multi-format plan to pilfer the gaming dollars of the public at large.



No laser trip-wires? This'll be dead easy

Picasso is a new art theft simulation from Promethean Designs and promises to be the genre's definitive entrant into the mature PlayStation market.

Gameplay features will include such cinematic mainstays as climbing up the sides of buildings in black jumpsuits, dodging laser

tripwires, drugging guards, and suspending oneself over a glistening diamond on a velvet cushion in a vast vaulted hall that is slowly filling with poison gas. Using a third-person viewpoint in a vast environment, the game will endeavor to create puzzle-like intrigue from a large number of film cliches.

While the final game for PlayStation is still a fair way off, *Picasso* for PlayStation should look at least as good as *Tenchu* while showcasing the same manner of sneaking and ninja roping antics we have come to know and love. It's also a nice change from the usual action games. Expect further info in future issues. We will be keeping a close eye on this one.

Medievil 2 gallops forth

Something wicked this way comes

Set to lurch our way in the very near future, *Medievil 2* looks like it's destined to top its predecessor in every way, claiming the title of the spookiest game on the PlayStation. Fans of Tim Burton movies like *Sleepy Hollow*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and *Beetlejuice* are sure to latch on to this one, as the winning combination of comic horror and Danny Elfman-esque music make an encore appearance.

"*Medievil 2* will boast numerous improvements over its predecessor", says Andrew Kennedy, the games

producer. It will be possible to dismember your opponents, severing distinct arms, legs, and even heads. The weapons available will be more versatile, and the enemy AI will react differently depending on the weapon you're using.

Controlling a skeletal knight brought back from the dead has never been so much fun. Next month we will bring you more details on this spooktacular gaming event, but for now savour these eye-gouging graphics and remember to look under your bed before going to sleep kids...



Medievil 2 will retain the classy comic flavour of the first game



The horror, the horror...

Journey with H. P. Lovecraft to the Dark Corners of the Earth

Coming next year for PlayStation 2 will be a game based on the works of H. P. Lovecraft: *Dark Corners of the Earth* is being developed for PlayStation 2, and is promising to be the most immersive horror experience yet on any machine. Using pioneering techniques in the realm of online gaming interaction, it sets to bring the multiplayer experience to the world of survival horror.

Produced in the UK by Headfirst Productions, *Dark Corners of the Earth* will be viewed from a first person perspective, so that the player can see the gothic world of Lovecraft through their



More disgusting than Silent Hill

character's eyes. It's also promising new levels of interactivity with the game environment, and randomness to aid replayability, but the main selling point will be the games ability to build dramatic tension.

At least six of Lovecraft's stories will be interpreted into the game world. The game will also take advantage of the



Creepier than Resident Evil

Emotion Engine's advanced physics modelling abilities, creating a game world of unprecedented realism.

Regarded as being the scariest horror writer ever, Lovecraft is famous for creating sinister worlds filled with ancient, evil gods that the main characters rouse from millennia of slumber, only to crush them

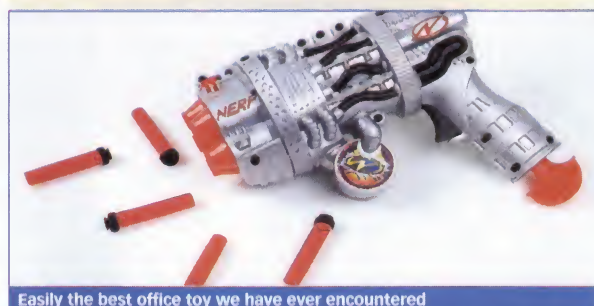


More suspense than Dino Crisis

beneath masses of tentacles. The pen-and-paper RPG based on Lovecraft's works, *Call of Cthulu* already has a cult following, and the game market is primed for an injection of Lovecraftian evil. *Dark Corners of the Earth* is scheduled for a third quarter release in 2001, so we'll have 18 months to build up the suspense.

The Strangest Freebie

Nerf Arena 5-Way Nerf Gun



Easily the best office toy we have ever encountered

To commemorate the release of Nerf Arena for the PC, Nerf produced a limited edition 5-shot Nerf blasters. One of our sister magazines was covering Nerf Arena, and they received one of these exclusive products. To understand how we got our hands on it, one must first appreciate the social dynamic that surrounds its use.

First, one loads the five suction-tipped foam Nerf bullets into the end of the gun. Second, one pumps the shaft in the handle until air can be heard trying to escape under the pressure that's built up. Third, one steals around the office, looking for someone absorbed by work or some other frivolity, closes in on that person, and fires at their face/arise/gonads at point blank range.

The recipient of this attention is usually less than pleased, and picks up the five

pellets that have just burrowed into their tender flesh. Since only five bullets were included with the gun, this renders the device useless after one shot. Out of guilt over physically attacking a co-worker, the assailant usually hands over their now-spent weapon, knowing full well they are most likely to be its next target.

This circle of terror saw the Nerf blaster change hands rapidly within its first hour of deployment, but we soon cottoned on to the fact that inanimate objects don't have feelings. Once it reached our hands, we turned our attention to flat surfaces, seeing how many of the bullets would stick. Then we lost interest in the device. It's probably still on the floor in the games room. In case you're interested, the actual Nerf Arena computer game is appalling.

PocketStation born again

New handheld possibilities

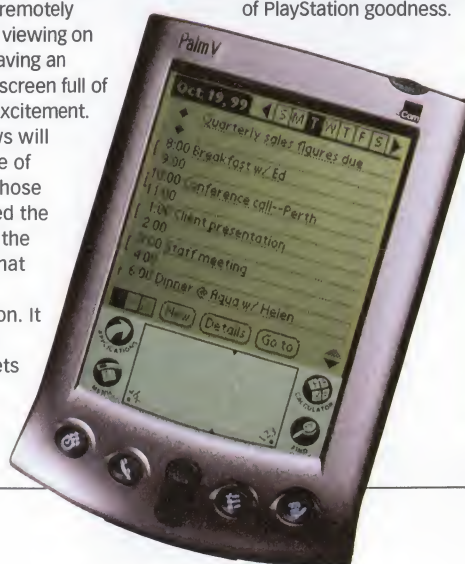
Next year Sony will be releasing a new personal digital assistant that will work together with a fleet of new Sony devices, including the PlayStation 2. 3Com, makers of the Palm Pilot series of PDAs, have given Sony the rights to use the Palm operating system in the new hand-held unit, which will utilise the industry standard iLink protocol to interact with every conceivable manner of electronic gizmo.

For instance, you will be able to use its infra-red interface to remotely control DVD viewing on your PS2, leaving an uncluttered screen full of action and excitement.

This news will doubtless be of interest to those who followed the life cycle of the non-event that was the PocketStation. It was one of those gadgets that was huge in Japan but

for some reason never made it to the West. This was probably for the best, as the tiny device was nothing more than a glorified memory card with a 36 by 36 pixel black and white display and some primitive game playing abilities. It wasn't even a good memory card, as you had to take up save game slots to store its facile software.

It has been speculated that just as the PlayStation received a sequel that the PocketStation too would get its own follow-up, and it now looks like the Son Of PocketStation could be worthy enough to escape its Japanese origins and join the wider world of PlayStation goodness.



Mini News

Midway battles it out with some Christians in *Mortal Kombat*... On Thursday the 6th of January, a group of around 20 people who referred to themselves as the "Christian Peacemakers" confronted the Chicago City Hall over their decision to give a \$2 million grant to local software producer Midway.

The game developer Midway, which has already brought us such wonderful titles as *Ready 2 Rumble* and *Gauntlet Legends* was planning to leave the windy city for greener pastures, but was induced to stay and expand after receiving financial assistance from local government.

But neither the Chicago City Council nor Midway figured on a group of opportunistic busybodies spoiling their fun, trying once again to prove through vitriol and rhetoric that video games are a bad influence, and that playing *Mortal Kombat* turns innocent children into mindless killing machines.

"Public money should not be going to companies that sell violent war toys for children," said one of the various speakers from the Christian group, which seemed to be placing some intangible values like morality above more concrete phenomena like graft.

In a field as rapidly expanding as game development, however, urban planners have to be realistic if they don't want existing or prospective employers to roam in search of the most attractive deals going, such as EA's new venture on the Gold Coast.

The Chicago City Council knew what was at stake when they approved the grant in December. A planning representative for the council put it thus:

"They made it very clear to us that they were going to relocate, which would have been more than 700 jobs."

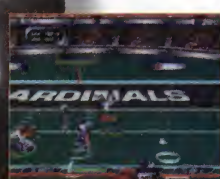
NBA SHOWTIME

NBA on NBC

two new titles for the

Dreamcast

&



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Music 2000 - Interview with an Ant

DJ Antman talks about creativity to the PlayStation's beat



Antman - one of the finest DJs in Australia, and he loves Music 2000!

Music 2000 is now the finest tool available for PlayStation users who want to create musical beats of their very own. Station Magazine caught up with DJ Antman to discuss the finer points of sampling and sequencing with Codemasters' classic...

STATION>> How long have you been a DJ?

DJ ANTMAN>> Around 13 years, I started in the late 80s.

S>> What sort of equipment do you normally use for putting together a track?

DJA>> Normally what you would use is a recording studio equipped with, say, something like Pro Tools, a keyboard to sample with...

There is quite a long and expensive list of equipment that you would need to use to create samples and to edit them and put them onto a decent track.

S>> If you wanted to install one of these in your home, how many thousand dollars would you be looking at?

DJA>> You'll be looking at, for a home studio, around about \$20,000. Just to set up at home.

S>> Now, a PlayStation unit costs about \$185 and Music 2000 about \$80 on top.

DJA>> About \$79, yes.

S>> You've had Music 2000

for about a week now?

DJA>> For over a week, yes.

S>> For over a week you've been giving it a workout?

DJA>> I have gone pretty hard with it, yes.

S>> What has particularly taken your fancy about it so far, what do you like?

DJA>> I like the fact that it's very user friendly. *Music 2000* has got a lot of facilities for going into help menus, really helping you with selecting, pasting, riffs, editing and you can do cloning so you can split riffs, you can do what you like with it. It is a lot easier to use so your time is spent in creating a track rather than spending hours and hours trying to get a riff keyed up and get the right pitch and anything like that.

S>> Is the normal sound outputs on the PlayStation adequate for what Music 2000 can do? Some people may lament the lack of midi input/outputs.

DJA>> You have only got your RF out and RCA leads, so you are going analogue but in actual fact, to the average Joe Blow, that really doesn't mean anything. The idea of *Music 2000* is if you create a track, and then if you really wanted to do a serious track and you really wanted the sound quality to be superb, like digital, then that's where you would go into

a studio and recreate it. So you have got your template made on *Music 2000* and then you go into a studio and say, look, this is what I have done, I would really like to create this again and I dare say it would be very simple to do it.

S>> So it can be used as a sketch pad if you will.

DJA>> A very, very high tech sketch pad because the quality of *Music 2000* is absolutely brilliant, really it is a superb tool.

S>> Do you think this is going to make music generation software more accessible, do you think this is going to bring it to the masses? Do you think this could be the golden age of techno?

DJA>> Definitely. The thing is it's Golden Age in terms of the price of the product and the availability and how easy it is for people to use it. I mean PlayStation is the highest selling console in Australia, probably in the world I'd presume.

Now in that sense you've got all these PlayStations and you've got people who love music. I mean, I don't think I've ever met anyone who doesn't like music. You know, it's there and it's in really easy reach. You don't have to be a sound engineer or a musician to use the program either, that's the good

thing about it. Of course you can go out and buy equipment and you can go out and buy programs and you can get a computer system and you do this and do that but then you spend up to a few thousand dollars and then it sort of takes away from the whole excitement of creating your track. If you've got money, then go for it. But if you're on a budget, this is the way to do it. And it's inspirational as well, it gets your juices going.

S>> So you find it can act as a stimulus in a way, you find yourself thinking in different directions.

DJA>> Yes, and then you'll be listening to a CD or morning TV or just the radio and you think "oh, that's a good sound." You have got that instant access to

a PlayStation and bang- you can start trying to create that sound or doing something similar.

S>> You really start to think about the way a music track is put together and so forth.

DJA>> Exactly, yes. And it's designed well, so that it actually teaches how music is supposed to be made.

S>> So it's not some Mickey Mouse treatment, it's scientific in its approach.

DJA>> It's relative - it's actually a tutorial aid as well for learning how music is designed and how you put together a track. So it helps you a lot, rather than you just trying to work with a program that doesn't give you any idea what to do, this tells you what to do.

And also the basic function is that you can use the selective riffs that they already have made up and what they do is when you put it into a track, it will automatically key it to your track.

But that's the simple version on the program and then you can design your own samples and then that's where you have got to use your pitches - that's where you have got to have a little more creativity and you have got to really have a good ear - for tones and things like that. So it's got a simple version and it's got a very technical side.

S>> It's accessible, and you can go deeper if you want.

DJA>> Definitely, yes. And also it's got a wicked video generation package as well so if you're really into graphics, this is another good reason to buy it as well so you can really create some interesting graphics on this program as well. Again, the visuals are the same as what I was talking about the actual music package, unlimited.

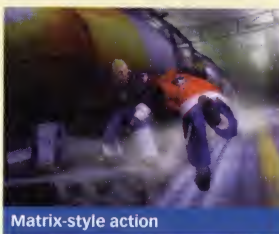
S>> Indeed. Anything else you care to add about the product as a whole?

DJA>> I would suggest that anyone who is interested in music and who is thinking about making their own sounds or making their own song, definitely, this is the program you want to use if you have got a PlayStation.



Square shall rule for a thousand years

Revolutionary games unveiled at Squaresoft's Millennium Event



Matrix-style action



The girl is a dame

In the lead-up to the launch of the PlayStation 2 in Japan, Squaresoft held a major media event in Tokyo, unveiling a battery of new titles for Sony's new super console. Core to their strategy on the new machine was the continuation of their FF franchise, as well as diversifying into new areas.

Perhaps most eagerly awaited of these launch titles was *The Bouncer*, which had no video footage on display, only staggering screen shots. The girl with the bizarre conical orange haircut was seen in more detail, as were the other characters of the innovative new fighter. Like *Ehrgeiz*, it involves combat in complex 3D arenas, and like *Ehrgeiz* and *Tobal*, is being programmed by Dream Factory, so the quality of gameplay is assured. But unlike its 32 bit

relatives it exploits the dizzying graphic potential of Sony's new 128 bit powerhouse. The Bouncer was already showing off the PS2s potential for lighting effects and smooth curves.

Also on display was *Driving Emotion Type S*, and a new baseball game called *Gekikuukan Pro Baseball*. An accurate simulation of Japan's unique take on America's national pastime, *Gekikuukan Pro Baseball* accurately models the physics, gameplay, camera angles, and even the mascots.

Over 10,000 people attended the event, regarded by all and sundry as a great success. In an emerging market for next-gen consoles awash with uncertainty and speculation, Square have sworn allegiance to the flag of Sony, and we are all going to benefit from the results.

Mini News

A four year study by the Australian Government has proven to the mainstream media what gamers have known all along; that video games are not harmful. The study was commissioned by the Federal and State Ministers responsible for censorship in an effort to determine whether video games that contain violence inspire violence in those who play them.

It was found that the main effect that games have on players is to give a surge of exhilaration and a sense of achievement at meeting the objectives defined by the game. A mere three percent of those who took part in the study expressed feelings of anger or aggression, and this was typically vented on the game controllers as opposed to other humans.

The study also found video games do not turn people into lazy, antisocial blobs; and that most people viewed gaming as a stop-gap activity to fill in time between other pursuits like sport. It was also found that most video games were mostly played with family or friends.

Younger game players were found not even to be particularly frightened of games with graphic content, who considered conventional media to be more scary. They could tell that the games were pure fantasy, and thus not connected to real life.

Also detached from reality is the "Australian Family Association," a group who demanded that the findings of the paper be quashed. They cite the fact that one or two massacre perpetrators in America may have played video games.

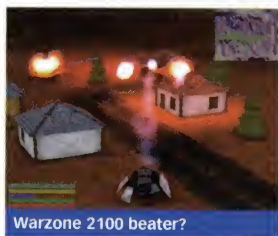
The national four year study saw research teams observe and then later interview game players in arcades. They also conducted focus groups, interviewed over 1300 persons, and examined similar reports from overseas. The result was conclusive: Games are not bad for you.

Dirty War is now on the backburner...

Sidhe Interactive divert their attention elsewhere

Dirty War, the promising near-future tank warfare game being developed by New Zealand's Sidhe Interactive has been put on hold indefinitely. The Wellington-based developer has recently secured a deal with a major, yet unnamed publisher on a completely different project, and as such their talented but small development team has been forced to leave *Dirty War* on the backburner.

Using Sidhe's proprietary development environment Nvion, *Dirty War* was an innovative multiplayer tactical game of armoured combat, which was to utilise unique and striking visual effects to provide the definitive tank combat experience on PlayStation. This could very well have been the ground-breaking strategy title that all PlayStation owners have been waiting for. It promises



Warzone 2100 beater?



Silos from Dune 2000?



Cool environmental effects



Dirty War's development is slow, but it's looking fantastic

intense anti-gravity tank battles for up to eight players, with weather and other features as yet unseen.

Unfortunately, it may be months or years before PlayStation gamers get to enjoy this product, as Sidhe must face the commercial reality and work on the title most likely to reach the market.

At the time we went to press Sidhe were unable to comment further, but seemed fairly excited at the prospect of working on this mysterious second title...

DIGITAL VERSATILE DISC

All the latest DVD and music CD releases for your multimedia pleasure



American Pie

American Pie was the best teen smut film to close out the millennium. Basically, it's a comedy about four friends in highschool who make a pact to lose their virginity by the time school finishes. The film offers a hilarious insight into the teenage male mind and its sex obsession. Whether it's classic scenes like humping the apple pie or short spots like the MILF scene, this movie is filled with plenty of material that'll have you wondering about your own highschool years. And if you look hard enough, there is a bit of substance to its plot with its subtle references to Shakespeare's Henry IV Part I. Special mention should also go to the film commentary from the cast and crew, where they talk about all of the jokes and alternative scenes that were cut out in the interests of censorship and general decency.

FEATURES: Spotlight on location, cast & film makers' notes, behind-the-scenes interviews, classic quotes, commentary with cast and crew, out takes, film trailers.

8/10

Go (Collector's Edition)

Starring the delectable Katie Holmes, whose innocent crooked smile is winning the hearts of many a teenaged male, Go tells a story about a group of friends and their adventure over a weekend. The movie is structured similarly to Pulp Fiction with its separation into different stories, each focussing on the adventures of each main character. The whole movie comes off as quite entertaining, if not a little contrived.

FEATURES: Dual layer disc, deleted scenes, Original movie trailer, alternative soundtrack with commentary from the cast and crew, Behind-the-scenes featurette, Original Movie Trailer.

8/10



Jawbreaker (Collector's Edition)

This takes the theme from Heathers and turns it on its head. Three popular girls in school kidnap one of their friends, bind her, shove a gobstopper in her mouth and leave her in a car boot. When they go to retrieve her, surprise surprise, she's got the thing lodged in her throat and is quite deceased. What follows is a by-the-numbers chick flick, a cascade of colourful clothing and blackened souls.

FEATURES: Audio commentary with director Darren Stein, cast and crew profiles, behind-the-scenes, Original movie trailer, music video.

7/10

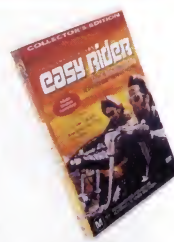


Easy Rider (Collector's Edition)

Jack Nicholson delivered his breakthrough performance in this low budget road movie which captured the imagination of 60s America. Harleys, hippies and heartache aplenty.

FEATURES: Dual layer disc, 67 minute retrospective documentary with commentary by Peter Fonda, Audio commentary by director Dennis Hopper, Profiles of director and key cast

9/10

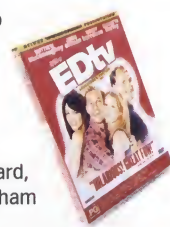
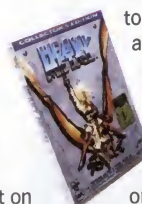


Edtv

Ed's life is very, very boring. He signs up to have his life shown on television, and suddenly the uncertainty principle kicks in and it becomes interesting by virtue of this interference. This mass-produced comedy was directed by Ron Howard, the guy who played Richie Cunningham on Happy Days.

FEATURES: Dual layer disc, Separate feature commentaries from the Director Ron Howard and the writers, Making-of documentary, Deleted Scenes, Out takes, Music Highlights, Theatrical Trailer, Production, Cast and Film makers' notes

7/10



Heavy Metal (Collector's Edition)

Based on the spectacular sci-fi/fantasy comic book of the same name, Heavy Metal is a cult cinema phenomenon. The film consists of eight animated shorts set at the farthest edges of time and space, all concerning a green orb of absolute evil bent on enslaving the universe.

FEATURES: Dual layer disc, Feature length rough cut with audio commentary, 35 minute documentary, deleted scenes, conceptual art, Heavy Metal Magazine cover gallery, production photo gallery

9/10

RoboCop 3

OCP, the futuristic mega corporation that built RoboCop and owns Detroit has been bought out by the Japanese. While the third installment in the RoboCop series is an undeniably average effort, there are some cool parts where Robo faces off against a chain smoking cyborg ninja. **FEATURES:** The original movie trailer

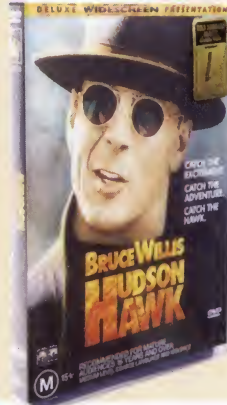
3/10



Hudson Hawk

Bruce Willis has been experimenting with a lot of different roles lately, but his incarnation as a cat burglar from New York helped make this one of the biggest flops in recent history. Still, it's decent action/comedy fare, and you can almost see the money pouring through the camera. **FEATURES:** Dual layer disc, Audio commentary by director Michael Lehmann, Filmographies

4/10



I Still Know What You Did Last Summer

This shock sequel has two things going for it; Jennifer Love Hewitt and Brandy. There's a certain aesthetic to watching them flee an unconvincing serial killer who impales all and sundry with a metal hook. For while this movie was intended to be horror, it works better as a comedy.

FEATURES: Behind-the-scenes featurette, two original movie trailers, filmographies of key cast members, music video.

6/10



RUN LOLA RUN

Feature review



Run Lola Run

For the true film connoisseurs amongst us, *Run Lola Run* is one of the best things that could happen on DVD.

Chronicling the whirlwind adventures of a young woman who's desperately trying to help her boyfriend get out of a bind, *Run Lola Run* is one of those films that is just as interesting to watch as it is to close your eyes and listen to.

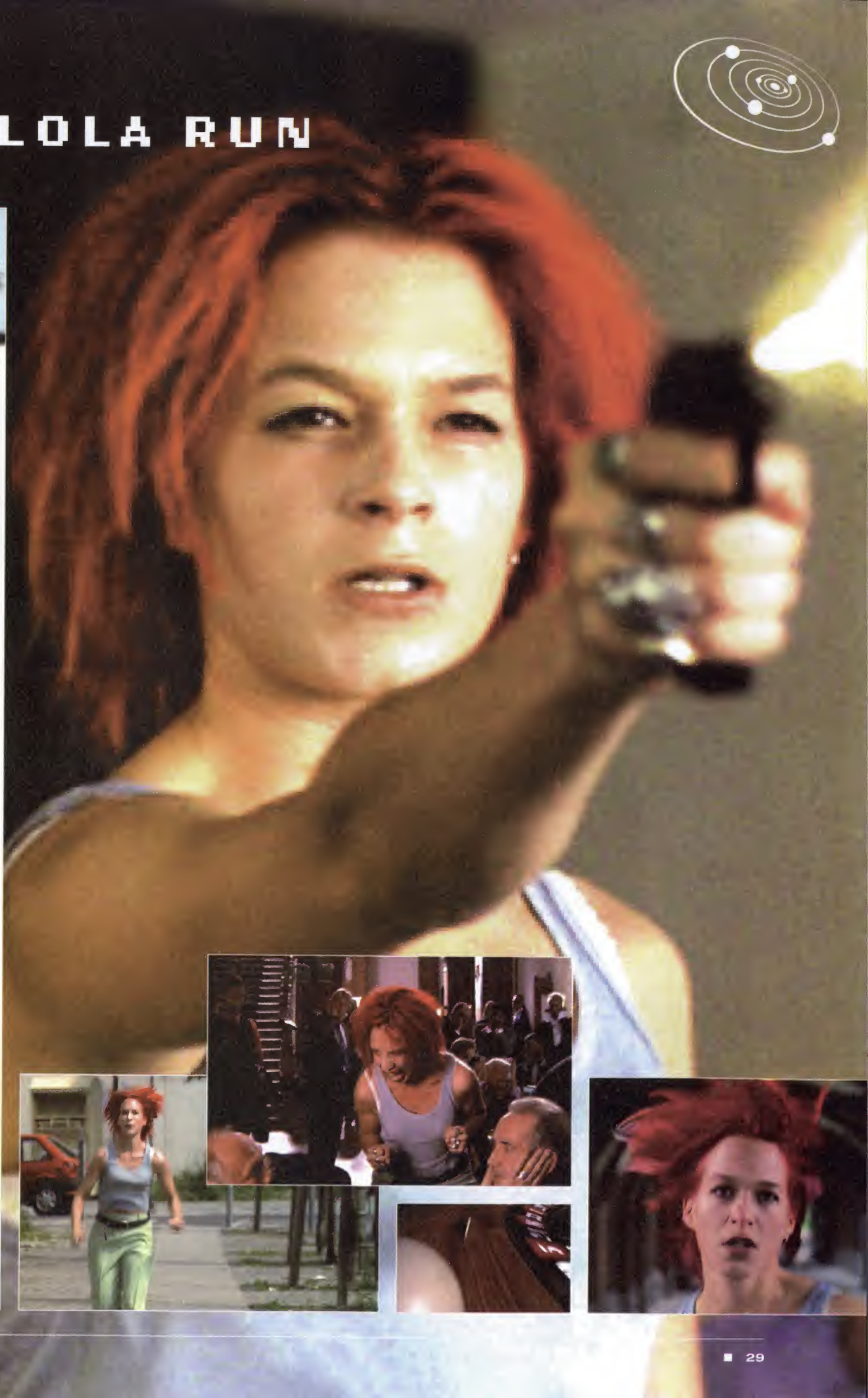
Here's the lowdown.

Lola's boyfriend, Mannie, is a klutz rookie dope dealer. He screwed up royally by leaving a rather large bag of cash in the train. 100,000 deutsche marks, to be exact. And if he doesn't have the money when he meets his boss in 20 minutes, he'll more than likely suffer a horrible death. It is therefore up to Lola to save her idiot boyfriend. She's got 20 minutes to get 100,000 marks and to get it half way across the city to Mannie.

That's basically all the movie is about. A cute German chick with wild red hair, running like mad to some awesome European techno tracks. Oh, and did we happen to mention the film is German? If you've ever wondered what it's like to swear in German, this is a good place to start. With that in mind, don't bother switching to the English audio tracks because they're worse than listening to an old Bruce Lee film and about as well acted as an episode of the *Young and the Restless*. Stick to the German dialogue, the way the director intended it.

With near reference-standard picture quality and a couple of decent extra features, *Run Lola Run* is the best way to show off your wonderful taste in European films as well as your stereo system. Just be sure to turn your sub-woofer way up.

9/10



COMPETITIONS



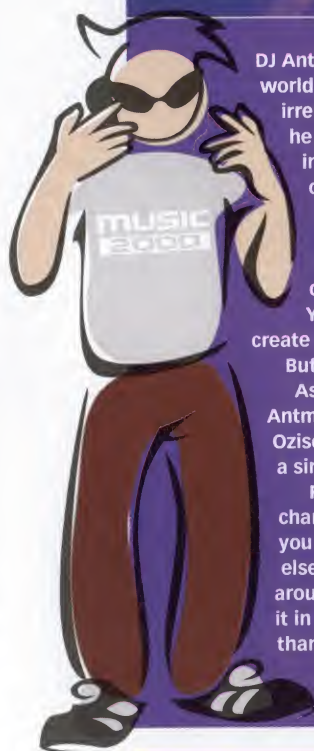
This awesome competition will close on March the 24th, 2000.

MUSIC 2000 BUDDING DJ AWARD

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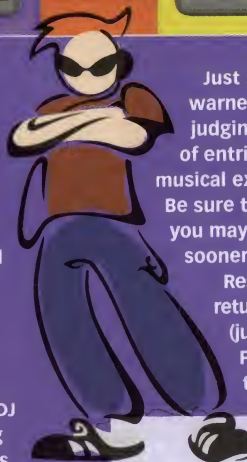
DJ Antman is one of the most prominent names in the world of electronic music making. His beats pump an irrepressible energy into clubs all around Australia and he has enjoyed much success opening dance venues in Asia as well, and you could challenge this master of mixes for a chance to win a day in a professional recording studio!

To learn more about this experienced pro DJ and the astounding musical capabilities of *Music 2000*, check out our interview with Antman on page 26. You might even get some clues as to how you can create a better track.

But on to the competition details!

As the central figure in this month's big competition, DJ Antman has engineered his own personalised track using OziSoft's amazing new title *Music 2000*, to be released as a single in March 2000.

Right here, right now, we are giving all of you budding DJs a chance to achieve the that glory you deserve. If you think that you can compose a musical piece that's better than anyone else's, or perhaps you have already got a few tunes lying around that you made last week, then put it together and send it in for judgement. If your *Music 2000* track is judged better than everyone else's, you could win an entire day at Grooveyard Recording Studios with the main man himself, DJ Antman.



Just save your track to a memory card and send it in! Be warned, however, for the judges are quite thorough and the judging may go on for a couple of months. We expect to get a lot of entries for this one, so only the absolute epitome of musical excellence shall be awarded this awesome prize. Be sure that your entry is worthy of our listening, or else you may find your memory card returned to you a lot sooner than you would have expected.

Rest assured that all memory cards will be returned to their rightful owners after the judging (just be sure to enclose your return address).

Please send your memory card entries containing the precious data in to:

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DJ AWARD**

OziSoft
c/o- Kym Warner
Unit 18, 1801 Botany Rd
Banksmeadow NSW Australia 2019

Codemasters®

FUNKY MUSIC COMP WINNERS: F DEIKOS (VIC), KARLENE BLACKER (NSW), DANIEL JORY (VIC), MICHAEL COWAN (SA), JOSH GARGIULO (ACT). **NO FEAR COMP WINNERS:** ADAM CLAY (VIC), PATRICK MCLOUGHLIN (NSW), BRENDAN GILL (TAS), CAMERON HANSEN (QLD), LOUISE MCCOY (VIC). **RUMBLE COMP WINNERS:** JARRAD GERAGHTY (NSW), NATHAN UNWIN (VIC), PETER ROY PRIOR (QLD), N DODDS (QLD), ROBERT COWLES (NZ)

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- NEWCASTLE SUPERSTORE
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- WARRAWONG
- YOUNG

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 - Woden Plaza
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WESTERN AUSTRALIA COUNTRY

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- BUNBURY
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- PORT HEDLAND

NORTHERN TERRITORY

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HOBART METRO - OPEN 7 DAYS

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- DEVONPORT
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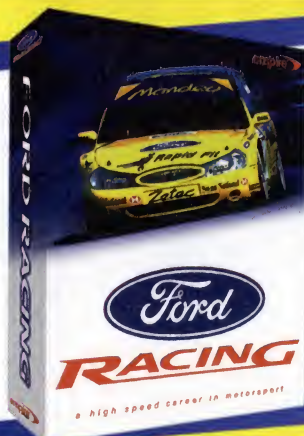
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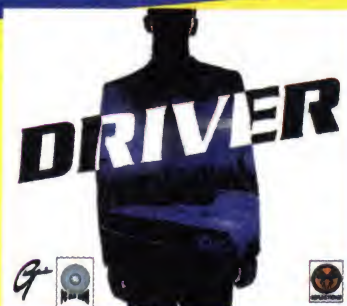
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RIDGE RACER EVOLUTION



When Namco babe and virtual spokesperson Reiko Nagase blew us a goodbye kiss at the end of the new Ridge Racer PlayStation 2 demo at the last Tokyo Game Show, none of us suspected that it was really goodbye. We take you through Ridge Racer's evolution on PlayStation and give you a taste of what to expect for its PlayStation 2 showing...



April

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What went wrong? Was it something we said? Perhaps she got too ambitious and started eyeing off Pac Man's position as company mascot. Maybe he got nasty and tossed her into the ghost pit.

Speculation aside, it's official: Reiko has been ditched in favour of a new upstart Ai Fukami who will take on the flag girl duties in Ridge Racer V. As well as starring in the intro video and holding the flag it's been reported that Ai (which means "love") will interact with the players, commenting on their performance and generally flirting, flicking her hair and giggling.

Hordes of Reiko Nagase fans were up in arms over the decision to replace her, and even casual gamers have been heard to comment "I liked the old one better." Only time will tell whether the new girl can win the hearts and minds of gamers worldwide.

Despite Reiko's wholesome sexiness and huge popularity, it's undeniable that she's a symbol identified with the original PlayStation. So for Namco's first foray onto Sony's next generation console, it kind of makes sense to bring in some new blood. The Ridge Racer series is, after all, an important cornerstone in Namco's empire and, despite the drooling fanboys, Ridge Racer games are mostly about bloody fast cars!

When Sony's first system launched back in 1994, Namco's Ridge Racer was there to satisfy gamers' need for speed. Ridge Racer bought the arcade experience into gamer's living rooms with super fast cars and detailed graphics - the cars' smooth texture-mapped polygons and gorgeous track environments set a new standard for console racing games. In Japan and the US Ridge Racer Type 4 came with a demo disk with excerpted tracks from the first Ridge Racer running at 60 frames per second, reminding gamers that while the series had come a long way, the original Ridge Racer was still damned good.

Ridge Racer Revolution wasn't a huge change on the original. It allowed the use of the link cable for multiplayer match ups (still no split screen yet), it added extra tracks and cars, and upped the difficulty a tad. More of a version 1.1 than a true sequel, Ridge Racer Revolution is the game that Namco would have originally wanted to release had they not been rushed into finishing a title for the PlayStation's launch. Ridge Racer was a great sequel that pushed the PlayStation to

new heights. It also allowed greater customization of the cars, buying new ones or upgrading between races and even tailoring your colour/pattern with an inbuilt drawing program.

The track design in Ridge Racer was also a big improvement and the method of advancement through the different classes in Grand Prix mode was changed.

'SPECULATION ASIDE, IT'S OFFICIAL: REIKO HAS BEEN DITCHED IN FAVOUR OF A NEW UPSTART AI FUKAMI WHO WILL TAKE ON THE FLAG GIRL DUTIES IN RIDGE RACER V.'

Namco dissed any multiplayer action with Ridge Racer, however, not even including the link cable option found in the previous game. The lack of a good multiplayer option was finally remedied with the release last year of Ridge Racer Type 4, which also saw the introduction of everyone's favourite flag girl.

Besides split screen mode, link cable compatibility and Reiko, Ridge Racer Type 4 served up eye-popping visuals that surpassed even Gran Turismo. Gamers unanimously praised its visual beauty, but were split on whether the handling and difficulty were of a high enough quality to call the game truly great.

So where do Namco go from here? They have a history of creating games that are visually flawless with no amateurish popup or clipping, and the New Ridge Racer looks like following that incredibly photo-realistic trend. They're not too bad at designing sexy rendered characters either, but what about the gameplay? Being a racing game there's not much room for innovation, but beyond the water-tight nail-biting high-speed driving, we can only hope that Namco addresses some of the criticisms levelled at Type 4. And if Ai Fukami is going to have a speaking role, Namco had better find a voice actor worthy of a Ridge Racer girl.





RIDGE

Ridge Racer V will be the latest in a fine tradition of racing games. Based on these screenshots and rendered artwork alone, there's no doubt whatsoever that the game will feature the same incredible track designs. Does anyone remember the same winding tracks and tight turns in Ridge Racer that had you gripping at the carpet fibres by the toes? Or how about the mind-numbing speeds you travelled at as you rocketed through the city scapes? You know the phrase "play till your eyes bleed"? It's because you can't take your eyes off the action. One blink, and you'll crash. That's the tradition Ridge Racer V will be continuing.

Taking full advantage of the PlayStation 2's Emotion Engine, game players will be launched into a completely new world of videogames unlike anything previously experienced. We are not just talking about prettier graphics - any new system can do that. We are talking about real physics, real 3D movement, and real interaction. And this isn't just in terms of cars crashing into each other - we are talking about every panel on the cars, every individual wheel, the strains of the engine under the bonnet... it's so real, it's almost scary!





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PARASITE EVE 2

Square's take on survival horror sees its way to a sequel.

FACT FILE

■ Publisher
Square

■ Developer
Square

■ Genre
RPG

■ Players
One

■ Expectations
Lots of great movies, scarier sci-fi stuff this side of Allens.



Awesome FMVs are back

Cool/disgusting mutation scenes



Terrifying monsters all round

Taking place a fair few years after the conclusion of the original game *Parasite Eve*, Square's *Parasite Eve 2* continues the horror/sci-fi adventures of Aya Brea in her numerous attempts to bring the threat of the mitochondria under control.

EXCELLENT MODERN SCIENCE FICTION

Considering many of us have only heard of *Parasite Eve*, it's probably worth giving a brief history of the series. The original *Parasite Eve* was based on a Japanese science fiction novel, where parasites that were long dormant within our cells were activated by a woman named Eve, who had mysterious magical powers.

It was later revealed that these parasites, or these mitochondria, were the driving forces within our cells, regulating the amounts of energy that are in the chemical reactions that take place in our bodies.

The mitochondria has possessed the power to change its form at will, reducing a person into a primordial soup if it so wished - and Eve happened to have the power to trigger the mitochondria on a massive city-wide scale. This would have been a part of her grand plan to take humanity through the next evolutionary process, but Aya managed to put a stop to that.

Parasite Eve 2 picks up well after the threat was neutralised. Aya herself is now several years younger due to the effects of the mitochondria, and she's now part of a special tactical squad that specialises in mitochondria research.



PE2 incorporates a new battle engine that sometimes allows first person shooting

When a distress call is sent out from a medical research facility, Aya is put up against a new strain of mitochondria, which produces Neo-Mitochondrian monsters.

HYBRID GAME MECHANICS

Square have always marketed the *Parasite Eve* games as the "cinematic RPGs", and *Parasite Eve 2* is no different. Using a perspective not dissimilar to the *Resident Evil* games, *Parasite Eve 2* allows you to navigate through some of the most horrific and atmospheric pre-rendered backgrounds as you attempt to find clues as to why the mitochondria have resurfaced.

When you see the monsters running about, you have got a choice of either running away and avoiding a confrontation altogether, or you can decide to fight it out with them. These battle sequences are a hybrid of turn-based weapons charging and also real-time movement.

CINEMATIC HORROR

The most striking feature about *Parasite Eve 2* are the improved visuals and cinematics. On one hand, the characters and backgrounds feature much more detail, meaning that you can make out all of the blood splatterings, gun-fire, and monsters with great big incisors with terrifying clarity.

On the other hand, the FMV sequences that the first game were quite famous for are back. There are even more mutations, more people getting liquefied, and more spontaneous human combustions to watch than ever before, making it a terrific treat (and a really good gore-fest) for anyone who is into science fiction.

At this stage in time, there is absolutely no telling whether *Parasite Eve 2* will make it to our shores. After the debacle that saw the first game completely overlooked, it's hoped that the recent release of *SaGa Frontier 2* means that the local distributors have gotten their act together with Square. Let's hope *Parasite Eve 2* makes it, because it's definitely worth it.

Kevin Cheung

VAMPIRE HUNTER D

Finally, something for the goths to be excited about

FACT FILE

■ Publisher

Victor

■ Developer

Victor

■ Genre

3D Adventure

■ Players

One

■ Expectations

A hack and slash fest with a dark, mysterious story behind it.

Vampire Hunter D is rather an old anime film released back in 1985. However, recently in Japan, a second movie was released and the *Vampire Hunter D* game is based on this second incarnation.

The game is in a similar vein to *Resident Evil* where a 3D character moves and fights over a pre-rendered 2D backdrop. The gameplay is simple. D runs around the castle killing monsters with his sword while picking up items, keycards and clues that allow him to unlock more rooms and progress through the game's plot.

D tends to talk a lot to his left hand, which has many helpful hints at times and through which many points of the plot are explained. But D isn't the only character you'll play. Another character called Leila shows up later in the game. She carries a gun so you can blow the critters away instead.

Visually, *Vampire Hunter D* does very well. The castle's main room is huge and is very impressive. The other rooms are quite dark and brooding, definitely befitting a vampire castle. The character animation is also very accurate. D moves and behaves very much like his anime counterpart.

Vampire Hunter D looks like being one of the better uses of an anime license and we'll be keeping an eye on this one as it develops.

Aaron Lai



Vampire Hunter D captures the essence of the anime's gothic surrealism

SAMURAI SHOWDOWN! WARRIOR RAGE 2

The old 2D slasher finally takes the 3D plunge

FACT FILE

■ Publisher

SNK

■ Developer

SNK

■ Genre

3D Fighting

■ Players

One or two

■ Expectations

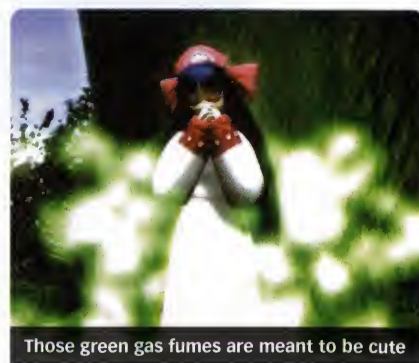
Fast combat and devastating moves.



Your stylist ought to be shot



Can anyone spell "b-u-s-h-i-d-o b-l-a-d-e"?



Those green gas fumes are meant to be cute

Following the same path of development as *Fatal Fury*, this latest offering in the *Samurai Showdown* series moves it into the arena of 3D fighting games. Actually, while all the action is rendered in glorious 3D, the gameplay remains largely 2D and much like Capcom's *Street Fighter EX*, this isn't a bad thing at all.



Unlike its 2D predecessors, *Warrior Rage 2* has many more modes of gameplay, including a Story mode and a Training mode. There are 11 characters available from the start with a further 12 to be unlocked as you progress through the game.

Most of the characters are new with the game being set 20 years after the original series, however some old favourites like Haomaru and Hanzo still make it to the character selection.

The fighting engine feels good. Character movement is fast and responsive. The attacks are similar to the original *Samurai Showdown* in style and execution so veterans should find no problem getting straight into the game. The new triple life bar system works well giving you good feedback about the state of your health.

The polygon count for the character models is low, making everything blocky. But the high frame rate and gameplay speed means you rarely notice it. The rest of the game looks slick with good visual and audio effects for sword clashes and special moves. We will be looking forward to seeing further developments.

Aaron Lai

PlayStation Top Ten

Hands up anyone who is surprised by Gran Turismo 2 being at the top spot. The big surprise was V8: Second Offence, which goes to prove everyone's got a bit of road rage in them. Who knows what effect Syphon Filter 2 will have in the coming months.

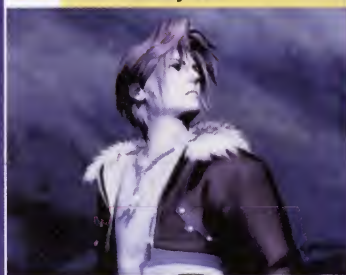
01 Gran Turismo 2



02 Resident Evil 3



03 Final Fantasy VIII



04 Vigilante 8 2nd Offence



05 NBA Live 2000



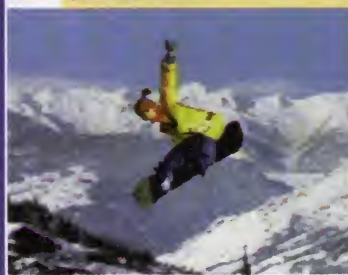
06 Crash Team Racing



07 Tomb Raider 4



08 Coolboarders 4



09 Thrasher



10 Worms Armageddon



What's the crew playing?

Kevin Cheung



KEVIN'S TOP FIVE

1. SaGa Frontier 2
2. Gran Turismo 2
3. Street Fighter EX 2
4. Vandal Hearts 2
5. Resident Evil 3

Saga Frontier 2



I'm unfortunately a sucker for the traditional 2D RPGs. SaGa Frontier 2 is a welcome addition to Square's next gen of software, which it seems are finally making their way here. It's classy and is a nice change from the formulaic nature of the Final Fantasy games. Mention should also be made of Vandal Hearts 2, which is a vast improvement over the original. The original wasn't great, but it's still one of my all time favourites. Finally, Street Fighter EX 2. Hardcore, addictive - gotta love it. And Hokuto is a babe.



Hillous Lesslie



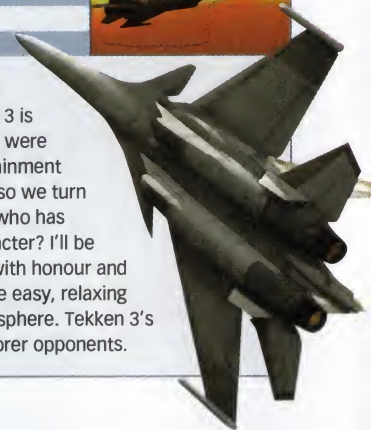
HILLOUS' TOP FIVE

1. Resident Evil 3
2. Ace Combat 3
3. Tony Hawk
4. Bushido Blade
5. Tekken 3

Ace Combat 3



It's not just because the game must be completed eight times to get all the secret stuff; Resident Evil 3 is actually good. But we tire of things easily, we who were raised on the more immediate mediums of entertainment (such as videogames, alcohol, sex, drugs, tennis), so we turn inevitably back to Bushido Blade. Is there anyone who has actually unlocked the gunman? Or any other character? I'll be plucked and buttered before I finish Slash mode, with honour and without dying, try as I may. Thank goodness for the easy, relaxing games. I refer of course to Tony Hawk and Electrosphere. Tekken 3's not 'really' relaxing, but still just as fun against poorer opponents.



James Cottey



JAMES' TOP FIVE

1. Worms Armageddon
2. Medal of Honour
3. Ace Combat 3
4. Resident Evil 3
5. Pong

Resident Evil 3



Spoken ze Deutch? Nein? Die Allied Swinehunt! The Americans may spell honour a funny way, but they sure know how to kill nazis. When you're behind a machine gun, feeding a belt of leaden death through your pulsing metal weapon, the dual shock flywheels spin almost continuously, shaking your sweaty hands until the last helmet has fallen from the last black-shirted goon. Medal Of Honor may be as linear as a wind tunnel, but it sure is fun to play. While the trio of second sequels in my list need no introduction, Pong has proven itself as a compelling beer-and-pretzels type of game. It's no match for Worms, of course, but it's just as insane.



PLAYTEST CONTENTS



Every game featured in our PlayTest section has been reviewed independently and objectively by our team of writers. We aim to give an informed and comprehensive idea of what the game is about, and most importantly, whether the game is good or bad. Each game reviewed receives an overall score out of 100 which should be seen in context of the type of game it is and in relation to similar titles it is competing with.

These factors are awarded up to five stars:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| GRAPHICS | Does the game look good and has it taken advantage of the available technology? |
| SOUND | The PlayStation offers developers the potential to create mind blowing audio. Have they? |
| GAMEPLAY | This is what it boils down to. Is the game enjoyable and fun to play, or will you hurl the joypad at the TV?! |
| DIFFICULTY | Is the game difficult? Does it take a great deal of skill to play? The higher the mark here, the more difficult the game is. |
| LIFESPAN | How long can you expect this game to hold your interest? Will you play again after you have beaten it? |
| PLAYERS | Some games allow two or more players to take part, either alternately or simultaneously, and some can even be linked to a second PlayStation for head-to-head two-player action. |
| GAME FEATURES | Many games take advantage of after-market devices such as analogue controllers, steering wheels, Sony's PlayStation Mouse, various light guns, the Multi-tap four-player adaptor, memory cards, various peripherals and accessories. |
| ALTERNATIVES | A selection of games that are similar in concept or appeal to the one reviewed. |

What our ratings mean:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| 91 - 100% | AN INSTANT CLASSIC, YOU MUST PLAY THIS GAME! |
| 81 - 90 | EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD, WITH FLAWS YOU'D BARELY NOTICE |
| 71 - 80 | A GOOD EFFORT WITH A FEW NIGGLING FLAWS |
| 61 - 70 | AN AVERAGE GAME THAT DOES A COMPETENT JOB |
| 51 - 60 | HAS SOME NICE IDEAS, BUT COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER |
| 41 - 50 | A GAME WITH A GREAT DEAL MORE FLAWS THAN MERITS |
| 31 - 40 | THIS IS NOT WHAT YOU BOUGHT A PLAYSTATION FOR! |
| 21 - 30 | OH DEAR, SOMETHING HAS GONE HORRIBLY WRONG... |
| 11 - 20 | DON'T BOTHER, A WASTE OF BOTH TIME AND MONEY |
| 01 - 10 | IMPRESS YOUR FRIENDS WITH A COOL BLACK DRINK COASTER! |

42 RESIDENT EVIL 3

The third installment to Capcom's flagship PlayStation title shows absolutely no sign of its age. The best games are the ones that scare the willies out of you.

46 COOL BOARDERS 4

The PlayStation's de facto flagship snowboarding title is back, proving once again that sequel-based improvements shouldn't be taken for granted.

48 MEDAL OF HONOUR

Vent out all of your World War 2 anti-Nazi frustrations on this ripper of a first person shooter.

50 SOUTH PARK: CHEF'S LUV SHACK

Okay. You get a bunch of questions, you answer them, and you score points. Sounds lame, but it's actually quite funny.

51 CHOCOBO'S DUNGEON 2

A genuinely cute new character? Or just another attempt to milk the Final Fantasy franchise for what it's worth? An RPG starring the Chocobo.

52 VIGILANTE'S 2ND OFFENCE

Jump in a car that's loaded with more weapons than the Batmobile, terrorise the streets, and blow up anything that gets in your way!

54 KILLER LOOP

Futuristic super-speed racing is the order of the day, and Crave answers the call with magnets that allow you to climb walls!

55 JADE COCOON

An RPG with a difference. It has a great story like Final Fantasy, it has graphics like Resident Evil, and it's even got a bit of Pokemon in it.

58 INTERNATIONAL TRACK AND FIELD 2

A sporting title for all you poor sods who didn't qualify for the Olympics. Run, jump, and sweat your way to glory.

60 AMERZONE

A brain-teasing adventure title that harks back to the days of Myst.

61 SUIKODEN 2

An RPG with hundreds of playable characters! Fans of the genre and of the original Suikoden should pay close attention.

62 SOUTH PARK RALLY

If Chef's Luv Shack isn't your cup of tea, then perhaps a few laps in a go-kart will suit you better.

63 JURASSIC PARK WARPAT

Take control of a rampaging dinosaur and use it to deal death on all others who oppose you. Saddle not included.

64 NHL CHAMPIONSHIP 2000

An officially licensed ice hockey game direct from the folks at Foxsports. Does this mean EA have some real competition?

65 RENEGADE RACERS

It's been a while since the last batch of dodgy racing titles. Unfortunately, Renegade Racers won't be the last of them.

65 BEAST WARS: METAL WARRIORS

Have the Transformers got what it takes to be more than meets the eye? Read on and find out more

66 WAR OF THE WORLDS

You've read the book, you've seen the movie - hell, you might've even heard the audio recording. Now play the game!

66 GUILTY GEAR

The biggest, baddest, and best 2D fighter around... and unfortunately the one with the cheapest tactics.

RESIDENT EVIL 3 NEMESIS

He's big, he has no lips and he wants to tongue-kiss you!

FACT FILE

- Publisher
Capcom
- Developer
Capcom
- Genre
Survival Horror
- Release Date
Out Now
- Players
One
- No. of CD's
One
- Expectations
More of the same thrills and scares, with some excellent new ideas

ALTERNATIVES

- Silent Hill
- Resident Evil: DC



Lay-deez and Gentlemen, presenting Capcom's latest rotting flesh sensation, the Nemesis! New and improved with extra speed and ferocity!

Capcom's third installment of their original survival horror series is here at last. One of the most highly anticipated titles of the year alongside *Final Fantasy VIII*, it arrives after numerous other games developers have continually attempted to cash in on the horror genre across multiple platforms with mixed results.



Meanwhile in the cinemas, horror has moved beyond the smart-arse 'post modern' teen thrillers, returning to supernatural terror or the classic creature feature format, usually with a high action quotient thrown in. Which is really what Capcom's series is all about. With two titles that have proven to be a more frightening experience than many movies (despite some shocking voice acting of a different kind in the original), can *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* claim the throne of terror again?



Everyone's dropping dead over Jill's new outfit

EYE OPENER

As *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* is set before *Resident Evil 2*, we players finally get to see the plight of Raccoon City that transforms it into the wasteland of undead, from which Claire and Leon escape. The T Virus is flowing into the city and its inhabitants - human or otherwise - are being infected in massive numbers.

When the area is swarmed by armies of zombies, the RPD and U.B.C.S, an Umbrella-instigated mercenary team, arrive in force to

face off with the enemy, as well as assist and evacuate any remaining citizens.

All the firepower at their disposal is still not enough. Spectacularly overrun by the rampaging hordes, only a few survivors remain scattered throughout the area. One of them is Jill Valentine. Even she can't believe her circumstances, remarking that "somehow... I'm still alive."

No longer the blonde live-action actress of the original title, she has been given a total digital makeover, complete with a new hair tint and wardrobe, the latter which is bound to raise some eyebrows considering she's in an environment seething with monsters.

Post R4's Reiko Nagase and Parasite Eve's Aya Brea, she is most likely to become the latest digital 'It Girl' of the moment. *Resident Evil 3* is her last attempt to escape from the doomed city.

CHICK'S GOT NEW MOVES

While longtime fans will feel quite accustomed with the presentation and controls, there's been a few tweaks to the gameplay. New moves have been added to your character,



We've seen many of these environments before, but not with HIM chasing us!



Not even a hail of bullets can stop Nemesis



Good time to use the dodge!

namely a 180 degree quick turn and a dodge. The latter, activated by using the firing and aiming buttons, will either make Jill push zombies away, dash around more powerful enemies or leap out of their attack range with a John Woo-esque somersault.

Additionally, the R2 button will lock Jill's aim onto objects other than monsters that may be lying around. Petrol drums and valves offer alternate (and sometimes spectacular) means of terminating large numbers of enemies with a single shot.

BETTER GORE FOR YOU

Visually the title maintains previous releases' high standards for the pre-rendered backgrounds, which are sometimes highlighted with animation such as water, fire or burst pipes. Sudden explosions in your immediate vicinity provide a few cheap scares at times. Both fire and positioning of lightsources appropriately affect Jill's appearance realistically.

The characters' modeling varies: while the mercenaries' combat gear and various creatures are extremely detailed, Jill's relatively skimpy clothes leave her shoulders and arms exposed, which at times look a bit rough. As reported last issue, there's a much larger variety of zombies in different sizes and shapes. Best of all they're detailed enough to display various stages of decomposition!

Although you cannot reprise the role of part RE2's legendary gun-toting tofu, there's an

excellent bonus game, The Mercenaries, after you complete Jill's story. A heartstopping collision between Day of the Dead and Escape from New York, the objective is for your character to reach the safe room near the start of the game from the other end of town.

It's obvious that the programmers have a nasty sense of humour: should he fail to reach the spot before time runs out, explosives implanted in his body will detonate!

Three of the U.B.C.S. soldiers are selectable, each carrying different weaponry and varying amounts of health restoring items. You will need them too, as the path to safety is teeming with





It makes you wonder why she wears that top around her waist, when all the zombies want to eat her shoulders so badly



Bits of old silicon flying about. No equal

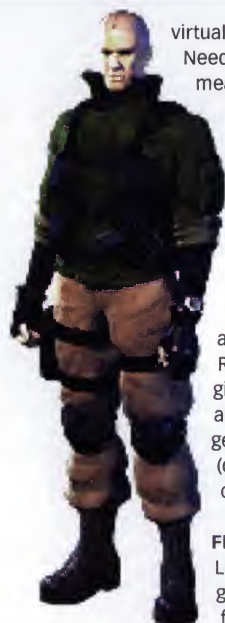
partner. True to previous Resident Evil games, there's always more to your first impressions about the immediate area's size.

SURVIVAL HORROR LEVEL

Two difficulty levels are available for novice and longtime players, the latter of whom really ought to play the Hard setting, should they want a genuinely challenging game. The Easy setting very generously provides Jill with an unlimited ink ribbon, machine gun and shotgun, in addition to the standard pistol. Plenty of ammo are available across all the weapons, as well as first aid sprays. While you'll probably still die a few times on the easy setting, the larger foes aren't that tough to beat.

Playing the hard difficulty setting, Resident Evil 3 truly earns its survival horror billing. Ammo and health pickups run low very quickly and you'll really need a strategy regarding what kind of enemies you should save your firepower for and which one's can be avoided all together. Gunpowder pickups, their flexibility of combinations and ammo synthesis become essential. Being the third title set in Raccoon City, this survival aspect in some ways provides the main source of tension as opposed to the setting.

Unfortunately, the otherwise useful dodge function has an annoying side effect because the buttons are the same for weapon drawing



virtually all the creatures from the game! Needless to say, you must use whatever means possible to eliminate any obstacles along the way.

Every kill adds precious seconds to your time limit, with multiple kills supplying bonus seconds. If you feel particularly confident, go ahead and chose the poor sucker armed with only a handgun of 15 rounds and a knife!

Thankfully, a generous ration of first aid spray helps his plight somewhat. Restarting the normal game, Jill is also given a key to the Boutique, which allows for costume changes into the gear worn by Regina from Dino Crisis (complete with red wig!) and Jill's original uniform from the first game.

FRIENDS AND FOES

Like the previous releases, most of the game's first half goes lightly on plot, focusing mainly on Jill's attempt to get

out of the city and people she meets during her escape. As you well know by now, not exactly all of them can be regarded as human, nor friendly in any way.

Worst of all is the Nemesis of the title. Resembling the mutant soldier dropped from the helicopter in part 2, he's faster, meaner and uglier. With a penchant for pursuing you, more smarts and armed with a rocket launcher, Nemesis should be fought with caution. You don't want to be on the receiving end of his gruesome finishing move!

Jill also runs in with members of the U.B.C.S. team, forming an uneasy alliance with them, particularly Carlos Olivera. He's a typically young and gung-ho kind of character, not to mention self deluded, thinking that his ridiculous accent can 'pull in the chicks.'

Resident Evil 2's multiple character feature returns briefly as Carlos takes a pivotal role later when Jill is incapacitated. With the strength to move aside a particularly heavy obstacle, he opens up an entirely new area, where he must find some medical aid for his



More rioting outside Raccoon Police Dept.

RANDOM ITEMS, RANDOM PLOT



Knife



Kendo Handgun



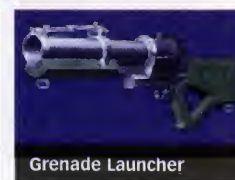
.44 Magnum



M37 Sawn-off Shotgun



Mine Thrower



Grenade Launcher

The much touted Random Set essentially switches the location of items as well as the odd enemy or two. For example, the safe in the RPD station contained a Magnum. Starting again (after a swift, sudden death of course), a grenade launcher was retrieved instead. Mirroring the herb mixing feature, ammo pickups now consist of three types of gunpowder in addition to standard bullets and shotgun shells etc for the various weapons. By using a special reloading tool, the gunpowder can be combined in different ways to form a specific type of ammunition. A Live Selection feature promises selectable multiple paths for the story to take at certain points.



Only one kind of fire will stop the relentless advance of the zombie hordes: gunfire!



Flaming dogs leap from a blazing inferno



Giant worms don't phase the vengeful Jill

and firing. When surrounded by multiple fast enemies Jill sometimes looks like some bizarre circus act, dashing and somersaulting around them, when all you want her to do is blow them away.

The reverse case can also apply in the hard mode, when more precise timing is required to trigger the move. During frantic close range battle sequences, you're more likely to be madly pressing the fire buttons as opposed to judiciously waiting for the perfect time to trigger the dodge move. Camera related problems from the previous games remain: its awfully confusing to fight with the more powerful enemies in far, wide angle shots when the characters are relatively small.

Alongside with the mysteriously disappearing bodies, another quirk is that Jill can walk right through burning corpses or small patches of fire without suffering a burn, while steam from pipes in a puzzle section later on causes her to react in pain.

The puzzles are easier, but its great because it streamlines the gameplay to a movie-like pace. If you're after more brain strain, Dino Crisis' puzzles offer a challenge.

SEQUEL-ITIS

While undoubtably scary, experienced players will nevertheless be able to pick where some of the shocks will happen. Annoyingly in some cases they are preceded with a slight pause which gives one a hint of what's to come, diminishing the impact. Thankfully the Random Set feature and Nemesis keep tension levels high. The most fatal assumption is believing that areas you've blasted through will remain clear. Windows are often smashed to usher in new monsters.

Confrontations with the series most formidable foe yet can be particularly hair-raising - its sometimes better to run! Getting to a doorway just as you see his arm swinging into the frame, literally centimeters away from Jill's head will give players a few jittery laughs! Zombies now also move faster than their previous sub-Michael Myers pace, so don't get too cocky with a standard pistol at close range.

While the live selection does add a bit of variation, the difference in alternate environments is small compared to the last game. Thankfully the difficulty settings do provide differently timed shocks and Nemesis appearances.

3RD OPINION

I am a total fanatic of the RE series. You can't imagine the excitement I felt at seeing how fluidly the zombies and the Nemesis moved around, not to mention the increased level of detail on their textures. Many of the new features like the Live Selection are fantastic.

At the very least, you cannot accuse Capcom of not trying to create more original concepts for the genre. Unfortunately, as Amos has mentioned, the Nemesis remains an enigma. And considering this game is more of a 'version 2.5' than an actual 3rd installment, it's disappointing that the story didn't provide a sense of closure to the chapter.

Kevin Cheung

FINAL WORD

Despite its shortcomings, *Resident Evil 3* remains unchallengable amongst horror games. Silent Hill may have had a superior chilling atmosphere, but it lacked genuine shocks, graphic finesse and had an unintelligible - not to mention uninvolved - plot. Parasite Eve, with its RPG random turn based system, killed any chance to deliver suspense or genuine shocks, despite its polished visuals.

Bandai's Countdown Vampires, now out in Japan suffers from substandard graphics and flawed playability due to an overtly wide camera placement, though its CG movies and character designs are nice.

Overall, *Resident Evil 3*'s graphic level is superb, bolstered with an excellent soundtrack that provides the perfect atmosphere. At times a great action score along the lines of *The Rock* or *Terminator 2*, it switches to chilling passages - especially when Nemesis is around - which will freeze you in your tracks.

Its CG movies technically are some of the most breathtaking examples of the art around. Their total running time may seem disappointingly shorter than the previous release, but the opening is nevertheless spectacular, eschewing the previous title's dialogue for full-on action.

The Mercenaries is an excellent mini game to play with a couple of friends. I don't think that I have laughed as hard as when someone picked the weakest guy as a joke, only to fluke his way right to the very end when unfortunately the time ran out, seconds before reaching the goal! All up there's no question about it: *Resident Evil 3* remains essential for horror fans.

Amos Wong

GAME FEATURES

Memory Card

Dual Shock Compatible

SECOND OPINION



HILLOUS LESSLIE

I love *Resident Evil 3*. Having finished the game several times in the interest of writing a good playguide, I have still thoroughly enjoyed every moment of it, even when the nemesis pokes his tentacles through my brain. To play, it is a little bit faster and the monsters are generally tougher compared to the previous *Resident Evil* games. I simply love the turn-around feature that Capcom have added, but the dodging is clearly a preliminary effort. The simple fact that it utilises the same buttons used for aiming and shooting renders it a tad risky, even though it can be satisfying to successfully evade a clawing beast.

STATION

OVERALL: A fitting end to the Raccoon City story, we can't wait to see what's next.

| | | |
|-------------|-------|--|
| GRAPHICS: | ★★★★★ | Unbeatable across the genre |
| SOUND: | ★★★★★ | Musically perfect in pace and atmosphere, great FX |
| GAMEPLAY: | ★★★ | Dodgy dodge move. Still scares 3rd time round |
| DIFFICULTY: | ★★★★ | Two levels perfectly set for novices and experts |
| LIFESPAN: | ★★★★ | Movielike pace. 50+ hours in the city would be dull! |

90
PERCENT

SAGA FRONTIER 2

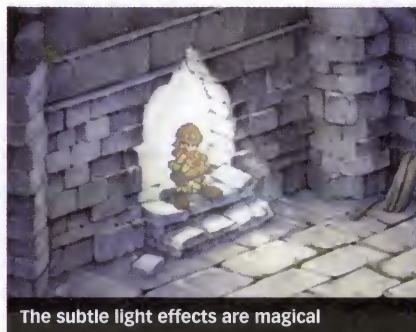
At last! A Square RPG that isn't final!

FACT FILE

- Publisher
Squaresoft
- Developer
Squaresoft
- Genre
Traditional RPG
- Release Date
Out Now
- Players
One
- No. of CD's
One
- Expectations
It's an RPG, and it's by Square. Well, 'Nuff said.

ALTERNATIVES

- Final Fantasy 8
- Alundra
- Wild Arms



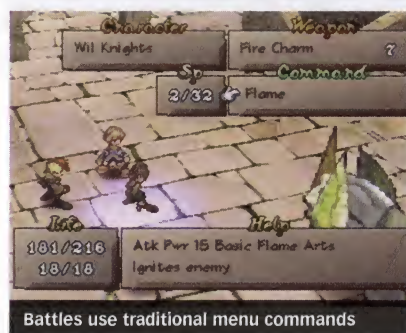
The subtle light effects are magical



The artistic designs are simply breathtaking



The dialogue is ridiculous, but it makes perfect sense if you play from start to finish



Battles use traditional menu commands



Square have retained their brilliant spells

The original SaGa Frontier (actually the seventh in the SaGa series) was reasonably well received in Japan, but it failed to please hardcore RPG fans and the release in the US bombed badly. So badly in fact that it was deemed unlikely that any of Square's SaGa RPGs would ever make their way out of Japan again.

That was until SaGa Frontier 2 came out in Japan last March and got a Platinum Star from Weekly Famitsu's notoriously picky critics. The new game did

away with many of its predecessor's unpopular features while retaining enough of the character of the first to still be a legitimate sequel. Square brought in some new innovations, too, and Sony are confident enough about the quality of the game that they have done an English PAL conversion due out in Australia sometime soon.

TWO DIMENSIONS

The first thing you will notice about SaGa Frontier 2 is that it's 2D. Nothing unconventional there you might say, but all the 2D backgrounds throughout the game are beautiful water colour artwork. The result is smooth and it gives the whole game the look of an animated fairy tale, particularly as Squaresoft has stuck with the medieval milieu for the story.

Gone from SaGa Frontier is the "Seven Quest" system, which saw you play through the game world with around seven separate characters. It has been replaced with fewer numbers of fixed partners and also a generation system.

This is basically a fancy way of saying that later in the game you will get to play as the hero's offspring. What you do in the beginning of the game has effects that filter through to later eras, so if you mess it up, then you will end up paying for the sins of the father.

WILL OR GUSTAV?

The start of the game has you playing as either Will Knights, a "digger" who works mining quells, a mineral used in magical weapons, or as Gustav the main character of the game. Gustav has been exiled since the age of seven when his father King Gustav VII discovered that his son couldn't use anima (magic).

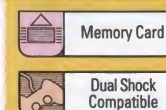
This a disgrace to the kingdom, so the King sent Gustav, along with his mother and some





Square's RPGs typically involve deep storylines that not only focus on war, but also morals, family values, and so on. SaGa Frontier 2 is no different

GAME FEATURES



SECOND OPINION



I am in awe of this game. 2D RPGs are one thing, but doing it entirely in water colours was a big risk that paid off very well. The game has an uplifting and magical feel about it, and its non-random battles are a very welcome improvement over the usual Final Fantasy fare.

friends, to live in another kingdom. Sequences unfold detailing Gustav's history and you take control of him at the age of 14.

Of course, along the way you meet other young adventurers who join your party, so you don't have to take on the dungeons and wilderness alone. Depending on your location it's often possible to choose to fight an enemy as a team, or a one-on-one using any character in your party.

Choosing the one-on-one option not only means bigger, better looking sprites on the screen, but also rather than entering single commands, you instead try to string together combos. For example, using Will Knights armed with an axe, entering Charge, Charge, Slash in sequence will allow Will to use the Wood Cutter combo. Different combo attacks are learnt throughout the game, and like the spells and weapons the more you use them the more powerful they become.

The combo system reminded me a little bit of Legend of Legaia's style, but here mainly because it is only in the one-on-one and not team battles. If you are killed then that is it - game over. I guess the rest of your party just runs away or something.

STATS OPERATIONS

There are 3 main points systems in operation on the stats side of things. Besides the usual hit points you have magic points, weapons points and life points. Whenever your character is reduced to 0 hit points, they simply lose one life point and can then be bought back with a simple healing spell. Hit points recover between battles too.

But one of the most interesting features about SaGa Frontier 2 is its role system, whereby you can assign each character a role in combat, for example the decoy role will draw attacks away from weaker party members while the diversion role can interrupt enemies combination attacks.

SaGa Frontier 2 is definitely an above average game. It has enough complexity and depth of story to satisfy role playing fans and newbies alike, and it's easily the best-looking completely 2 dimensional RPG to date.



Elton Cane

STATION

OVERALL: Complex, multipart story. Great graphics and a good fighting system. What more do you want in an RPG?

| | | |
|-------------|-------|---|
| GRAPHICS: | ★★★★★ | Lush 2D watercolours. Very pretty, and quite original. |
| SOUND: | ★★ | The usual Midi tunes are a bit of a let down |
| GAMEPLAY: | ★★★★ | Plenty of depth and room for different playing styles |
| DIFFICULTY: | ★★★ | Remember to use the quicksave feature and you will be right |
| LIFESPAN: | ★★★★ | Many hours of RPG fun here |

89
PERCENT

COOL BOARDERS 4

Searching for the Police Academy of videogames? Look no further

FACT FILE

- Publisher
Sony
- Developer
989 Studios
- Genre
Sports
- Release Date
TBA
- Players
One
- No. of CD's
One
- Expectations
Snow, cool clothes, stunt tricks and image should equate to a nifty game. Bollocks.

ALTERNATIVES

- Coolboarders 1, 2, 3
- MTV Snowboarding
- Pro Boarders



Humans are odd creatures at the best of times. They'll find the most peculiar ways to amuse themselves. Some fling their bodies from aeroplanes, placing their trust in a sheet of sewn material; whilst others climb cliff faces at precarious heights.

It's not so strange then that binding your feet to a plank of wood and hurling yourself down steep slopes and high rock faces is one of today's fashionable sports. But if all that climbing snow-clad mountains and having to suffer cold temperatures isn't your cup of tea, then you can effortlessly lay back in a beanbag, pizza within easy reach and pull off 360s or a 'stale fish' at your own leisure with a number of snowboarding video games. One such game is *Cool Boarders 4*.

THE HILLS ARE ALIVE, WITH THE SOUND OF... ER, CHEESY SOUND EFFECTS?

As the name depicts, this is the fourth installment of the Cool Boarders series. Unfortunately, just like the Batman movies, Cool Boarders has deteriorated every time a new one has come out. To be brutally frank, *Cool Boarders 4* has gone down hill from its predecessors (mind the pun).

You begin the game by entering a single event, practice, tournament, trickmaster or statistics, all of which don't require explanation. The single event mode is made up of the events that take place in the tournament, those being: down hill, slope style, half pipe, big air, cbx and a special event.

Some events pit you directly against others as you slide down a mountain and bustle amongst them. Adding a small element of diversion to the game is that you can punch opponents in a way not dissimilar to Road Rash.

The move looks more like a slap than a punch and the sound that is generated equals that of a tomato thrown against a wall.

Racing never manages to convince you that there is actually any speed involved. Rather, it feels as though you're taking a ride down a sluggish escalator at David Jones. Other races see you zigzagging in between flags in a slalom-like event. You tackle other events alone, like the big air, slope style and half pipe.

The big air stage has you leaping off massive jumps and accomplishing stunts that

would otherwise kill, or at best, maim mere mortals. Likewise, the half pipe and slope style are a trick based affair. The tricks and stunts are what you have seen in the previous Cool Boarder titles and can be strung together for bonus points for those who play it long enough.

The player has the option of creating their own snow boarder, but real athletes of the sport can be selected. Names like Darren Cingel, Natasza Zurek, Brian Savard and Jimmy Holopoff won't ring a bell for most of us, but fans will appreciate their appearance. You can also select from a variety of snowboards that all have diverse characteristics. Some are better for tricks and others for speed.

THE VISUALS ARE AS CHARMING AS A BULLDOG EATING A BOWL OF CUSTARD

Graphically, *Cool Boarders 4* is somewhat underwhelming. Trees, spectators, flags, fences and anything else that isn't the snowboarder looks like a crudely cut out piece of cardboard. Yet, these cardboard cut outs are



strangely rock solid. Run into a paper thin tree and you'll fall flat on your ass accompanied with a Hollywood sound effect of a punch.

Even innocuous flags have the power to make you eat snow. Although practical, the boarders are a mash of poorly constructed polygons that at times are hampered by clipping. Just have a look a Jimmy Halopoff on the select screen, his leg in the background manages to twist over the other in what looks like some bizarre yoga stance as he spins.

I was also able to steer my character right through rails at times like they weren't even there. The animations are nothing special, which is a shame because there is no real reason they couldn't have been smoother and less rigid. Overall, the visuals haven't reached any new heights and the overall graphical presentation is old hat to say the least.



YOU'VE SEEN ONE, YOU'VE SEEN THEM ALL.

The music that's in *Cool Boarders 4* rocks pretty hard. There is a blend of heavy guitar and techno music that suits the whole cool 'image' of the sport. The sound effects are another fairy tale altogether.

Other than the boards sounding like they're sliding across gravel, you will hear the crowds cheer or boo when you misjudge a jump and end up using your head as a brake pad.

The control of the boarders is responsive enough and perfecting tricks isn't too difficult an ordeal, but the lasting appeal of frolicking about dodgy mountain slopes in baggy pants,

weaving between cardboard trees at snail-like velocity will wear very thin, very quickly.

Of all the of the Cool Boarder titles, the fourth version takes a definite leap backwards and has nothing new really to offer us that last three haven't. Something different would have obviously been nice. A progression perhaps.

Give us a sasquatch or bigfoot that hunts boarders or even some wildlife to mow down for crying out loud. There is no need to purchase this title if you own any of the other titles, but if you are a hard core fan, there is some fun to be found here.

Arthur Adam

GAME FEATURES

Memory Card

Dual Shock Compatible

SECOND OPINION



KEVIN CHEUNG

You'd think they got the message when *Coolboarders 3* turned out so poorly. *Coolboarders 4* is worse. The boarders are much larger, but they animate badly, clip into all sorts of objects, and turns the game into a retarded mess. It's barely the superstar game it was when it first started out. Pity.

MASTERS OF THE SLOPES



DARREN CINGEL

DOB: 5-17-75

Height: 5'6"

Date turned pro: 1995

Favourite Board: The Santa Cruz x-156 c-158

Career Highlights: Getting to travel around the world and have fun riding, parts in films Kapow and Snowblind.



JIMMY HALOPOFF

DOB: 1-25-71

Height: 6'0"

Date turned pro: 1991

Favourite Board: MLY 157 variable

Career Highlights: 1st place Big Air 1997 X Games and 2nd place Slope Style 1997 X Games.



BRIAN SAVARD

DOB: 3-4-72

Height: 5'10"

Date turned pro: 1994

Favourite Board: K2 Brian Savard

Streamer 161

Career Highlights: 1st Obe Big Air, First descended down mountains in India, Iran, Bolivia, and Alaska.



NATASZA ZUREK

DOB: 4-3-78

Height: 5'2"

Date turned pro: 1996

Favourite Board: Burton Balance

Career Highlights: 1st 1999 European open half pipe, 1st 1998 Innsbruck air and style quarter pipe and anytime I see my photograph in a snowboard mag.

STATION

OVERALL: Nothing special over the previous games to warrant a purchase whom already own one of the previous.

| | | |
|-------------|-----|---|
| GRAPHICS: | ★★ | Cluttered and intrusive, with heavy slowdown |
| SOUND: | ★★ | Some decent effects, but the bumping is a bit repetitive |
| GAMEPLAY: | ★★ | Hardly intuitive, and mostly frustrating |
| DIFFICULTY: | ★★★ | Provides a fairly decent challenge all the way through |
| LIFESPAN: | ★★ | Fans might persevere with it, but it's pretty forgettable |

62
PERCENT

SPACE DEBRIS

In Space, no one can hear you scream

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
Sony
- **Developer**
Rage
- **Genre**
Space Shooter
- **Release Date**
Out now
- **Players**
One
- **No. of CD's**
One
- **Expectations**
Yet another shoot-em-up. La de da.

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible



"I am the great four-eyed Grogoth, and I choose your vessel to be the bearer of my royal seed"



Remember the intro to Spaceballs?

NOT AS GOOD AS STARFOX

To be fair, *Space Debris* is competently coded, and while not offering anything new to the genre, it encapsulates everything before it in an accepted format. You have levels which are like the Death Star trench scene, you have ones in space, and you are equipped with homing missiles and smart bombs as well as your standard laser. Some levels spice things up a bit by giving you a wingman to share the load, but as for a two player mode, this is lacking.

In terms of execution, it is most similar to *Lylat Wars* on the N64. If you have a N64 as well as your PSX, *Lylat Wars* is on Nintendo's budget range now, and with up to four player action may well represent a better purchase. If you want a space shooter on the PSX, then look at everything available. Chances are you will find something better than *Space Debris*.

James Cottee

That's right, sound can only travel as vibrations through air. When you watch *Star Wars* and hear the whining of space fighter engines, or the blasting of laser cannon through the void, you are witnessing not an emulation of legitimate phenomena, but the execution of artistic licence.

Unless one is some kind of obsessive-compulsive nerd, this discrepancy is invisible to the viewer, because it is an excellent movie one can't help but enjoy. *Space Debris*, on the other hand, is a space combat shoot-em-up game and entering an established genre with fine entrants like *G•Darius* and *R Types* it must work doubly hard to justify its existence.

Not only must it prove that it's as good as the competition, it has to distinguish itself sufficiently from those that have gone before to make it worthy of purchase.

GOING OVER OLD GROUND

Space Debris is a space combat game which takes place in 3D, but while you can see huge battlecruisers and alien landscapes moving around you, your interaction with them is limited. Your craft is drawn through a set course, and can only move up and down, left and right within a set plane as defined by your TV screen. It is possible to speed up or slow down to better approach your foes, but this is only within the course that each level takes to worm through the alien armada.

Your enemy is a shooter staple remaining unchanged since 1942; identical waves of enemies that fly in set patterns, with the occasional boss. This sets an identical method of adaptation to your challenge; memorise their patterns and adapt to beat them.

It would be more than possible in this day and age to present you and your enemies in a truly 3D sphere of influence, and learn real dogfighting skills in epic conflict reminiscent of the space battle at the end of *Return Of The Jedi*, like the efforts of the *Colony Wars* series. But *Space Debris* is the genre at its most linear, and comes off as a sort of *Rebel Assault 3*.



STATION

■ **OVERALL:** This is an unnecessary addition to an already crowded genre.

- | | | |
|----------------------|------|---|
| ■ GRAPHICS: | ★★★ | Colourful, competent, but by no means outstanding |
| ■ SOUND: | ★★ | Since when could you hear explosions in space? |
| ■ GAMEPLAY: | ★ | Shoot the enemy. Dodge the bullets |
| ■ DIFFICULTY: | ★★★★ | As hard as <i>R-Type</i> . Not as rewarding |
| ■ LIFESPAN: | ★★ | If you can stomach it, you have hours of tedium ahead |

58
PERCENT

MEDAL OF HONOR

SS death camp criminal battalion go to Monte Casino for the massacre

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
EA
- **Developer**
Dreamworks
- **Genre**
Shooter
- **Release Date**
Out now
- **Players**
One or two
- **No. of CD's**
One
- **Expectations**
The PlayStation gets a nazi blaster.

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible



It's just not kosher to print swastikas in mags

Video games and blowing away nazis have gone hand in hand since the dawn of time. The formula of being a lone operative behind enemy lines works very well for a first person shooter, as it accounts for the impossible odds and unspeakably evil, yet anthropomorphic foe in the form of SS running-dog fascist bullyboy genocidal scumbags.

The first successful FPS was Wolfenstein 3D, a game which revolved around wasting German soldiers and little else. While this was a worthy platform for the launch of Doom, and then Quake, today's evolved market expects more than an animated shooting gallery.

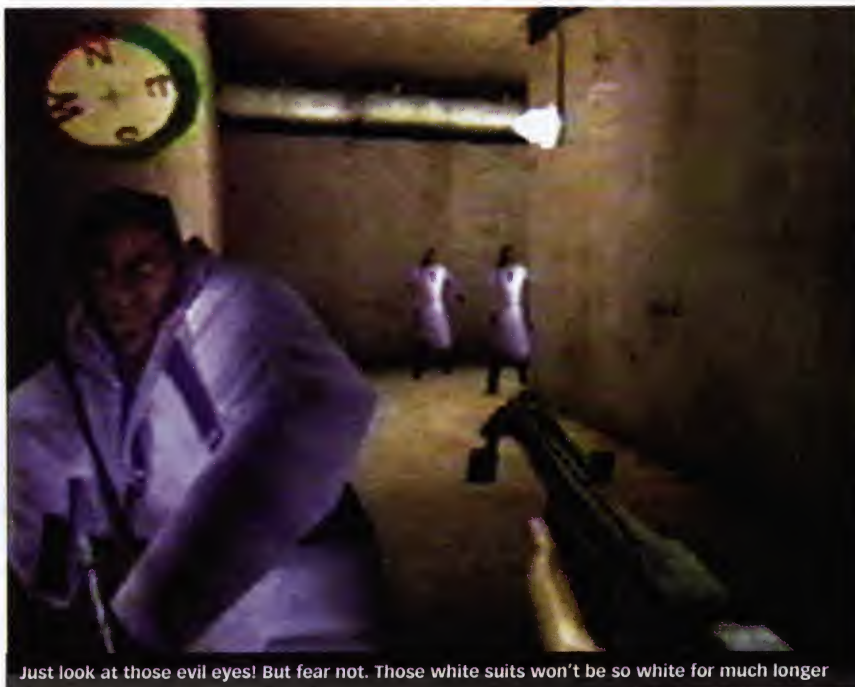
Enter *Medal Of Honor*, Dreamworks Interactive's foray into the world of interactive slaughter. While it may seem incongruous that such a game would be released by a company that has "family" written all over it, this duplicity can be accounted for by Steven Spielberg (one of the owners of Dreamworks) and his undying hate for Germans. To put it another way, think of *Medal Of Honor* as Saving Private Ryan, The Game.

THE RED, WHITE AND BLUE

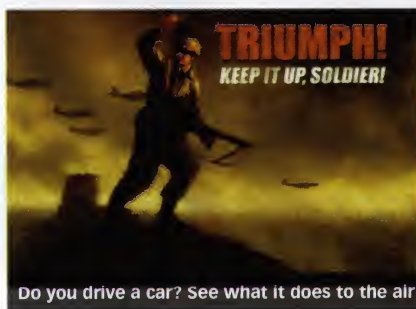
You play a fresh recruit to the OSS, America's overseas networking outfit and forerunner to the CIA. While regular armies meet each other in open battle, your job is to sneak around behind enemy lines blowing up generators and bridges and stealing plans and perpetrating dastardly deeds in the name of truth, justice and the American way.

Hence the mission structure and level design drag you through convoluted paths and alleys in rural France, and do a fairly good job of imparting a sense of exploration and daring-do in levels which are utterly linear in their progression.

Which is not to say that your missions are unimaginatively put together. In a typical mission, you may have to achieve several different and highly varied objectives. Knocking



Just look at those evil eyes! But fear not. Those white suits won't be so white for much longer



Do you drive a car? See what it does to the air



It's not all head shots and spilling nazi blood

out radio transmitters, exterminating the Gestapo, and finding crucial documents are the order of the day. The environment is even moderately interactive; you can, for instance, take over a machine gun nest and mow down the hordes of nazis that start commando rolling out of nowhere the instant you touch it.

EVA AUF WIEDERSEHEN

Your enemy is not bereft of intelligence, either. When you lob a grenade at a typical nazi, he will try to kick it back to you! The convoluted terrain is as much a tactical advantage as it is eye candy, as you can hurl a grenade into a group of soldiers who you suspect will overwhelm you before ducking

back to safety, or fire from a crouch protected by shattered masonry.

Atmosphere is rounded out by cries of disbelief in German as you startle soldiers before their imminent demise, but novelty isn't everything. The gameplay comes off as being a glorified shooting gallery, where cardboard enemies pop up seemingly at random.

While the two player deathmatch mode has some interesting level designs, it must compete with Quake II and its four player competitive play. About the only unique feature is you get is that chance to shoot honest-to-God nazis. *Medal Of Honor* is entertaining. Just don't expect it to blitz your world.

James Cottee

STATION

■ **OVERALL:** Did we mention you get to use a bazooka? It's a pleasant diversion, but a diversion nonetheless.

- **GRAPHICS:** ★★★ Textures that warp in the wind. Nice newsreel footage
- **SOUND:** ★★★ Your weapons give satisfyingly realistic clunks and bangs
- **GAMEPLAY:** ★★ Run and shoot and run and shoot and run and shoot and run
- **DIFFICULTY:** ★★ They are only stupid nazis
- **LIFESPAN:** ★★ Once you have memorised the level patterns, there isn't much left

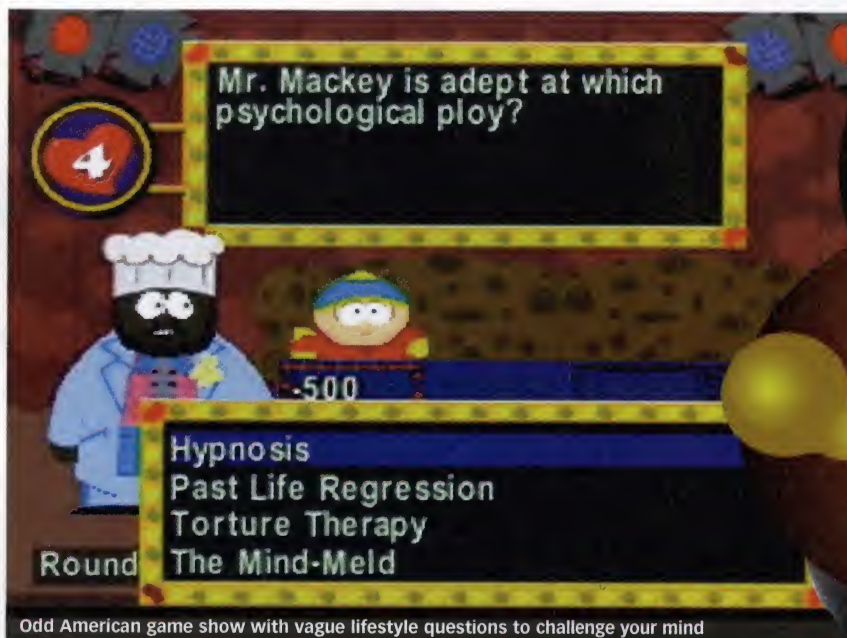
81
PERCENT

CHEF'S LUV SHACK

Not even the Brown Note over a bowl of Cheezy Poofs could save this

FACT FILE

- Publisher
Acclaim
- Developer
Acclaim
- Genre
Trivia
- Release Date
Out Now
- Players
One to four
- No. of CD's
One
- Expectations
Does the world need more South Park gimmicks?



Odd American game show with vague lifestyle questions to challenge your mind



GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Standard Controller
- Multi Tap Adaptable 1-4 Players

The Playstation has seen some interesting and original games developed for it. It has also unfortunately seen some tired and lazy ideas rehashed into marketing ploys and published as "games" or "interactive multimedia".

Chef's Luv Shack has fallen into the latter camp, and is premised on the idea that enough people will buy anything to do with South Park to make publishing a game worthwhile. Instead of drawing on the interesting adventures and stories that have surfaced in South Park episodes, the developers decided to instead make a trivia game, similar in concept to the successful "You don't know Jack" line of PC games, and throw in South Park references and characters.

Up to four players can have a go, and each picks one of the four South Park children (Stan, Kyle, Cartman, and Kenny). Your character choice determines what samples you utter between questions, and little else.

You then proceed through a series of questions based on characters and events in South Park episodes, scoring points for correct answers and receiving penalties if you make a mistake. This is a simple premise that has been done before, and done much better.

Every couple of questions, players proceed into a "mini-game", which is selected randomly from 19 possibilities. Each of these games is a



Bonus mini-games for all your buff-needs

reworking of old arcade games like Donkey Kong and Space Invaders, but with South Park characters. This is just applying a popular set of cultural icons to old and tired ideas, and becomes tiresome quickly.

No features have been added to these "mini-games" other than the graphics and samples from South Park, and even if you found a couple you liked, they are selected randomly so players cannot choose to repeat a mini-game when they want to.

ANY SURPRISES?

Technically, *Chef's Luv Shack* holds no surprises. The graphics are cheap and clumsy, but that's fair enough because it is supposed to look and feel like a South Park episode. The voices and sounds are done properly, with the



See that 'loading' CD? You'll see plenty of that

same voice actors from the show providing samples for the game. One frustrating feature is the obtrusive loading times: between every mini-game and trivia round (and sometimes more often), a loading image comes up with a good few seconds break.

This is evidence of sloppy programming, as many Playstation games have recently shown good loading and response times, and they are working with complicated graphics and sounds.

Chef's Luv Shack fails to provide much entertainment at all, from a gameplay, technical or comedy perspective. It is little more than a shallow and cheap attempt to wring money from a successful television series, and should be avoided by all but the most die-hard of South Park fanatics.

Leon Tranter

STATION

■ **OVERALL:** Could've been a much more entertaining game, but it's spoilt by all the load times.

| | | |
|----------------------|-----|--|
| ■ GRAPHICS: | ★★ | It looks very shoddy, but I guess it's meant to |
| ■ SOUND: | ★★★ | They got the samples right |
| ■ GAMEPLAY: | ★ | Nothing of interest at all |
| ■ DIFFICULTY: | ★★ | Very easy, questions repeat themselves within days |
| ■ LIFESPAN: | ★ | Could become a handy drink coaster |

41
PERCENT

CHOCOBO'S MYSTERIOUS DUNGEON 2

Chickens shake their heads back and forth all day. Not the Chocobo

FACT FILE

- Publisher
Sony
- Developer
Squaresoft
- Genre
RPG
- Release Date
TBA
- Players
One
- No. of CD's
One
- Expectations
There's no telling what this big chicken's going to get into next. This time around, it's a real-time RPG.



Cute, simple graphics do the job here



"You take the wings. I'll take the breast"



"Aww... Isn't he a cute little puddin'?" - that's basically the appeal of the Chocobo

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible

After the release of *Chocobo Racing*, you could say it was inevitable. Chocobo, the cute yellow chicken that's appeared in countless games from Squaresoft, has been adopted by the PlayStation faithful as a mascot of sorts.

As such, he is appearing in all sorts of off-shoot games, from stallion simulations and track racing to this: an RPG of its own, named *Chocobo's Dungeon 2*.

A CHICKEN AND HIS MAGIC WAND

The premise of the story is that Chocobo and his friend accidentally stumbled upon a magic cave. After walking inside and having a look around, they realised that they couldn't find their way back out. As a result, Chocobo is left with no choice but to advance head-long into the cave, endure the unknown dangers that lurk within, and hopefully find a way out.



You progress through the caves in a sequence of floors that go down. It's dark inside, so you have to slowly explore around to create your own maps. The key to your success will be in finding treasure chests that are interspersed throughout the caves,

offering goodies like magical trinkets, weapons, health items, power-ups, and so on. These items can then be used any time you battle it out with the monsters that scurry about in the darkness around you.

A CUTE LITTLE ADVENTURE

In terms of presentation, *Chocobo's Dungeon 2* most closely resembles the old *Secret of Mana* games on the SNES. That is, you have animated 2D sprites running around in lush 2D environments, fighting and casting spells in real-time as opposed to the turn-based battles of, say, *Final Fantasy VIII*. This suits the game well, especially

considering that it's meant to be a cutesy happy-go-lucky adventure. Anything too serious would have spoiled the mood.

It goes without saying that *Chocobo's Dungeon 2*, like *Chocobo Racing*, is a comical game. Expect chirpy music, expect cute little animations... if you are looking for something technically brilliant, I suggest that you look elsewhere to a game like *Final Fantasy VIII*. This game is designed to delight, not to impress.

All that's really left to say now is that as an RPG, *Chocobo's Dungeon 2* holds up pretty well of its own right. Many of the backgrounds are uncharacteristically sparse, and the game can be accused of being just a tad too easy, but it has enough depth and room for developing your character to captivate at least some of the RPG fans amongst you. One of the highlights are, of course, the magic spells. Cast a powerful spell, and your screen will be filled with a brilliant technicolour array, just like in any other Square RPG.

It's unfortunate that *Chocobo's Dungeon 2* couldn't have been any better even if it tried - the reason being that it was inherently limited by its cartoon atmosphere. PlayStation owners still have yet to enjoy the pleasures of a decent real-time RPG like *Brave Fencer Musashi*, and a game like this just leaves the fans begging for one.

Alielle Sin

STATION

■ OVERALL: An average little adventure that fans of the Chocobo should appreciate. Not to be taken seriously.

- GRAPHICS: ★★★ Cute and functional, though a bit sparse at times
- SOUND: ★★ Nothing elaborate, but it's very cute
- GAMEPLAY: ★★ Exploring one level after another can become tedious
- DIFFICULTY: ★★ It's designed with kids in mind
- LIFESPAN: ★★ There's nothing to warrant finishing this game more than once

71
PERCENT

VIGILANTE 8: SECOND OFFENCE

Rampant vehicular destruction, with a futuristic twist

FACT FILE

■ **Publisher**
Activision

■ **Developer**
Luxoflux

■ **Genre**
Car Combat

■ **Release Date**
Out now

■ **Players**
One or two

■ **No. of CD's**
One

■ **Expectations**
Set out to be a better game, but it is quite similar to the first.

ALTERNATIVES

■ **Driver**
■ **Killer Loop**
■ **Twisted Metal 3**

The keenly awaited sequel to the PlayStation's greatest destructive driving game is finally here and it lives up to all of its expectations. Without detracting from the essential seventies flavour set by the first *Vigilante 8*, *Second Offence* adds substantially to the reliable recipe with new characters, fresh missions and revolutionary power-ups which literally take the action to new levels.

The game has been improved upon in almost every department, with the most noticeable enhancements being in the amount of architecture in the environments and moving parts in the scenery. The weapons have also been slightly upgraded to allow for more special moves and therefore more versatility.

Of course, to distance this game from its predecessor in a way substantial enough for people to consider its purchase, the plot has taken some unlikely turns in the fictitious interim between the two games. For a start, several new characters in the game have appeared in the late seventies by travelling back in time from the year 2017.

BALDERDASH, YET STRANGELY INTRIGUING

But despite the storyline being more dubious than Groucho's "moustache", Luxoflux have gone all out to weave a fine background and continuing tale for each and every character. It not only gives you something to read during the loading times, but it keeps you focussed on your missions, eager to unravel the next stitch in the story, no matter how patchy it might be.

Part of this ongoing intrigue is due to the fact that there are more mission objectives this time. Instead of only protecting some silos or destroying some barns, the player now must complete a whole three different objectives to pass a stage.

These new aims in life are usually easy enough to achieve, but there is always one which truly makes you think about your environment. In one stage you must stop a convoy of drone semi-trailers crossing a bridge, but it is never explained just how you are supposed to do this. You have to examine your



Wanton destruction is the aim of the game in *Vigilante 8: 2nd Offence*

surroundings and find out what large machine you can operate or what strange device you can trigger in order to accomplish your goals.

ACTION PACKED CARNAGE

In each stage there is a lot more going on than before. The unfortunate downside to this is that the framerate suffers when there is too much happening in your immediate vicinity. The fluidity of the frames fluctuates according to how many CPU-controlled objects and moving items are close to you. While it is super smooth most of the time, when the action heats up the motion gets a bit jerky.

However, for what it does you wouldn't notice. When you're on your own collecting ammo, everything's peachy. When you're in the middle of a fight with a semi-trailer, a garbage compactor, a moon buggy and a school bus, you're too busy to notice the dropped frames.

FUTURISTIC FIREPOWER

As before, each character has their own special weapon on top of the six already available. The idea of time travel opens up doorways for any kind of fantastic thing you could imagine, which means that Luxoflux were able to invent some pretty far fetched weapons for *Second Offence*.

One guy, Detective Chase, has a special weapon called "Hard Time". He fires an electric green ball of energy ahead which then explodes and freezes all vehicles within its radius for about ten seconds, allowing Chase to really lay into them in their impotence.

All of the six standard weapons (mines, rockets, homing missiles, auto-tracking mortar shells, auto-tracking cannon mount and flame thrower) have three alternate modes of fire in addition to the normal one. Everyone also gets a machine gun as the default weapon with infinite ammunition.





Things look incredibly detailed up close, but the detail fades quickly in the distance

For example, the mines can be deployed two at a time as slow-moving, heat-seeking missiles. Two of them can be dumped as a "turtle mine" which flips its victim onto their roof. You can even drop a cluster of six which act as a magnet capable of holding the next unwary victim to the spot for a short time.

The concept of characters from the future acts doubly in *Second Offence's* favour for plot enhancement and device. It happens that with them these new characters brought new vehicles from the 21st century. These vehicles all have the ability to transform into hovercraft when the player collects a certain power-up.

There are others too. In the snow stages there are ski power-ups which transform your car into a beast with chained wheels on the back and steering skis on the front. In the stages with swamps or harbours there are boat power-ups which turn your vehicle into a floating watercraft with propellers.

While at first these extra power-ups seem a little forced for the sake of making a sequel better, they do lend the game a certain added tad of strategy and give the gameplay some much needed diversity. Plus it's loads of fun to launch your vehicle high into the air off bumps in the terrain to grab those hard-to-reach items when you have the hovercraft power-up.

FUNKY SOUNDTRACK

The soundtrack to this game is definitely worthy of more than a mention, with sixteen tracks none short of funky. A few of them try to propagate the new



Those containers are begging to be blown up



Nothing stops the bus

futuristic sub-theme of the game with electronic beats, but they are all listenable.

Another plus with the soundtrack is that it is written as music, not data, so you can plonk your lovely black *Second Offence* disc into a regular CD player and soak up the vibes to your heart's content. Great party music.

Another big bonus this game has to offer is the return of the brilliant cooperative modes. Two players can either take each other on head to head or they can team up. The cooperative modes allow you to drive into a short war against any number of the vehicles of your choice, or you can even work your way through the Quest mode with a friend.

All up, *Second Offence* satisfies. With eighteen stylised vehicles, from motorbike to monster truck, and loads of vast open environments with operational equipment, everything fully destructible. You will not tyre of this one too soon.

Hillous Lesslie

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible

SECOND OPINION



JAMES COTTEE

"Where we're going, we don't need roads..."

Finally the hover car action from the *Back To The Future* movies has been recreated in an arena based combat game that throws continuity to the wind in favour of everything-but-the-kitchen-sink style action. There's clipping, and there's slowdown, but you're so fucked up it's hard to care. A funktastic triumph.

STATION

OVERALL: The best in car combat, *Second Offence* will be sure to please anyone who doesn't take it too seriously.

| | | |
|-------------|-------|---|
| GRAPHICS: | ★★★ | The texture details only stretch so far, but it's smooth |
| SOUND: | ★★★★★ | Solid explosions; fresh, funky and rather appropriate music |
| GAMEPLAY: | ★★★★ | Easy to drive, easy to shoot, loads of fun smashing the scenery |
| DIFFICULTY: | ★★★ | There are settings for all skill levels |
| LIFESPAN: | ★★★★ | The two player options will maintain interest |

87
PERCENT

KILLER LOOP

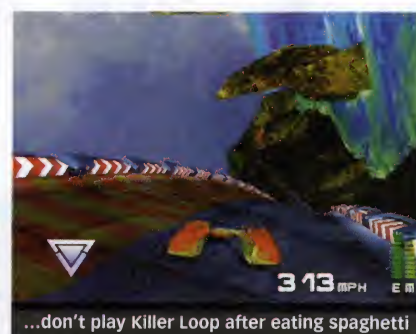
Just like the Sunnies, only different...

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
Crave Entertainment
- **Developer**
VCC Entertainment
- **Genre**
Futuristic Racing
- **Release Date**
Out now
- **Players**
TBA
- **No. of CD's**
One
- **Expectations**
You'll go fast.

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible



Just as any phenomenally successful game is guaranteed to provide us with a string of sequels, so too we are very likely to get clones. Some clones are lame rip-offs that steal all the good ideas from the original, without showing any of the love and care the original developers put into the game. Other clones are a bit more thoughtful, even original and playable - it's unfortunate that this is so rarely the case.

Fortunately enough, *Killer Loop* belongs to the second category. It's fairly obvious that it's a *WipeOut* clone. It borrows every conceivable idea, from its theme of frictionless vehicles in a futuristic world to its extremely derivative soundtrack. It has everything except the ads for Red Bull. However, it does add interesting new elements - some of them a bit clumsy, but all novel - and gets full marks for trying.

WHAT'S WIPEOUT?

In case you've spent the last five years on a meditation retreat in Tibet, and haven't the foggiest clue about our *WipeOut* references, *Killer Loop* is a racing game based on the premise that in the future, petrol shortages lead to a new kind of vehicle. Some sort of magnetic-repulsion frictionless transport thing, to be exact. And, oddly enough, this funky new modern mass-transit system, just like the old mass-transit system, lends itself very well to dangerous high-speed sporting races.

WHAT'S NEW?

Firstly, your vehicle has special magnets in it that allow it to stick to the track, even when it is sideways or up-side down. Secondly, power-ups can be stockpiled as you collect them, so you have to choose between using lots of weak



power-ups, or occasional strong ones. For example, one offensive power-up gives you a missile, but three offensive power-ups give you a guided missile that homes in on its target.

However, the weapons aren't really all that useful, as the vehicles don't suffer any perceptible damage: they just get slowed down. Sometimes it's better not to shoot the guy ahead of you, because you'll just end up running into his rear end.

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

Depending on how you feel about racing games generally, and *WipeOut* in particular, this game may be dull as dishwater. On the other hand, it

could be just your cup of tea. As in *WipeOut*, you need to completely memorise every track in order to win. For this reason, there's a lot of replay value in the game. However, it also demands that you dedicate yourself to it for a long time before you can really make any progress, so it's not for the casual gamer.

Also, for a racing game, it's a bit poor not to have a real two-player mode. If you've played *WipeOut* and its sequels to death, and are hungry for more of the same, this might be just the game for you. But, if you don't already love the futuristic-racing genre, this one won't convert you.

Gus Hungerford

STATION

■ **OVERALL:** For an obvious clone, *Killer Loop* is surprisingly original.

| | | |
|----------------------|------|---|
| ■ GRAPHICS: | ★★★★ | Very competent, rich, but not groundbreaking |
| ■ SOUND: | ★★★ | Appropriate techno. Weapon effects sound good |
| ■ GAMEPLAY: | ★★ | Track memorisation gets dull quickly |
| ■ DIFFICULTY: | ★★★ | Mastering the magnets takes skill |
| ■ LIFESPAN: | ★★★ | Unless you get bored, it'll keep you busy |

77
PERCENT

JADE COCOON

An RPG that will make any anime fan cry



FACT FILE

■ **Publisher**
Crave Entertainment

■ **Developer**
Genki

■ **Genre**
RPG

■ **Release Date**
TBA

■ **Players**
One

■ **No. of CD's**
One

■ **Expectations**
This is a genre with some good titles, so success will be rather difficult.



Kevin and James concur: cute anime babes rule



Army boots? She wears regular shoes, demon!



Could this be the jade cocoon?

GAME FEATURES

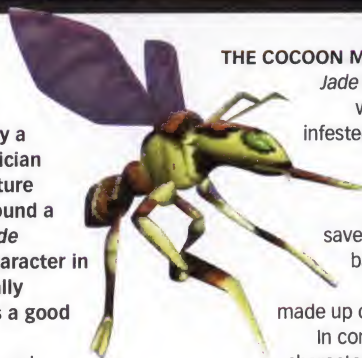
Memory Card

Dual Shock Compatible

Jade Cocoon is a curious Japanese RPG set in an original fantasy world. You play a Cocoon Master, a magician with the ability to capture and train creatures. Sound a little familiar? Well, *Jade Cocoon* places your character in a rich world with a really complex plot and does a good job of drawing you in.

Most of the interface and style will be familiar to those who have played other Japanese RPGs such as the Final Fantasy series. However, unlike many of those games you must complete your quest alone. There are many other characters to interact with (some will help, others will harass you), but you must wander through the world by yourself.

You can however capture and bring along three creatures to fight in your place when you must battle the denizens of the forest. These creatures can learn abilities, go up levels, and even become merged with other creatures to create interesting hybrids. Combat is turn based and you can choose to attack, defend, use an item, magical attack, or special ability.



THE COCOON MASTER

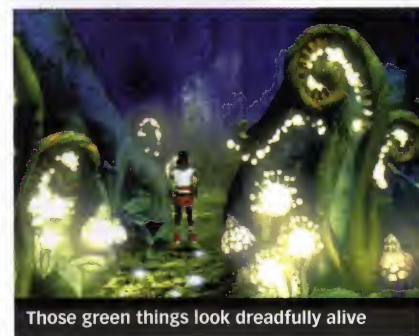
Jade Cocoon is set in a fantasy world based around forests infested with minions (demons). Your character is a Cocoon Master, and must capture and battle these Minions to save your village. The forest backgrounds are lush and complex, with creatures made up of well-rendered polygons.

In conversations some of the characters blur and wobble a little, but the graphics are generally very good. Some anime cut scenes help establish the setting, and are well directed. The sound and music are excellent; the background noises of the forest do a good job of creating the right atmosphere.

While fairly simplistic, combat (and there's a lot of that) is made more interesting by having multiple creatures to choose from, which you can switch between in the middle of a fight. This means you can use the various attacks of your beasts to best effect, and bring new creatures up levels quickly.

ADDICTIVE GAMEPLAY

Your ability to grow, merge and rename your creatures is a surprisingly addictive element in



Those green things look dreadfully alive

the game, making up for the confusing plot. Don't expect to tear through this game though, even for RPG veterans; the size and difficulty of the game will help keep you in it for quite a while.

Jade Cocoon is tackling some big players in a rather tough genre to improve on and comes out surprisingly well. It is always good to see a fantasy world with original ideas rather than swords-and-sorcery, orcs and goblins. The background and the story combined with the fun of breeding your menagerie of mutants make *Jade Cocoon* a very worthwhile investment.

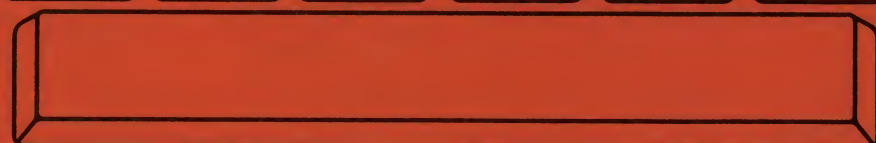
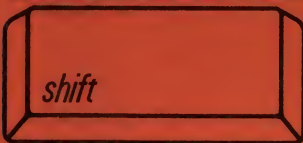
Leon Tranter

STATION

■ **OVERALL:** A worthwhile choice for anyone interested in breeding a bunch of mutants

| | | |
|----------------------|------|--|
| ■ GRAPHICS: | ★★★★ | Wonderful forest scenery, good cut scenes |
| ■ SOUND: | ★★★★ | Good background sounds/music, though combat effects are poor |
| ■ GAMEPLAY: | ★★★★ | Capturing and improving your creatures is surprisingly enthralling |
| ■ DIFFICULTY: | ★★★ | Solid learning curve |
| ■ LIFESPAN: | ★★★★ | Don't expect to finish it in a weekend, though once will be enough |

80
PERCENT





INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD 2

Konami show us their second version of the Olympic Rings

FACT FILE

■ Publisher
Konami

■ Developer
KCET

■ Genre
Olympics

■ Release Date
Out Now

■ Players
One to four

■ No. of CD's
One

■ Expectations
A thorough representation of a wide variety of events will please most comers.

ALTERNATIVES

■ Nagano Olympics
■ IT&F 1

SECOND OPINION



HILLOUS LESSLIE

It's very easy to say that ITF2 is pointless and redundant. All you get is a set of mini-games where you mash buttons together and maybe get a cramp. At least you can feel good about being part of the Olympic spirit, so long as you feel good about commercialised events which used to have some remote human value.



ITF2 replicates the androgynous figures you see in real life

After the success Konami had with the first *International Track & Field*, they seemed to put the whole Olympics-simulation to one side while they concentrated on other things.

After playing this new iteration, we've revised our opinion and now suspect that they have been working on this title since the first one was released, polishing it to the professional piece of work it is and timing its release to coincide with Olympic fever.

International Track & Field 2 comprises 12 distinct events where you and up to 3 of your friends can compete against one another. If you don't have enough mates, the computer will fill up the remaining positions so that you are always playing against 3 other competitors.

You choose your country from the twelve on offer (Australia being one of the few), enter your name and begin your long tiring journey into Olympics training, diets and drug testing... Well, maybe not. Instead you simply compete against each other in the events on offer.

The 12 events cover a lot of ground in the individual events stakes. None of the team sports are represented, which was probably a wise move as it allowed the developers to

concentrate on the niche market without competing against established titles for the team games. We won't keep you in suspense any longer; the events are 100 Metre Sprint, Long Jump, Javelin, Pole Vault, Hammer Throw, Weight Lifting, Gymnastics, Diving, 50 Metre Freestyle, Cycling Time Trial, Cycle Sprint and Canoeing.

Each event concentrates on one aspect. For example, the Weight Lifting is represented by the Clean and Jerk event, while the Diving is the Women's 3 Metre Springboard and the Gymnastics by the Women's Horse Vault component.

BALANCED DIFFICULTY LEVELS

The difficulty levels are rather well balanced unlike other titles where there really isn't too much of a difference. It actually does get harder as the rating becomes more difficult, and easy mode is a good introduction into the events as various aspects like timing are much less important. To add to this

variation of required effort, the qualification requirements also increase, in some cases with a hefty difference.

There are only two game modes: Arcade and Challenge. Challenge is simply an equivalent to Time Trial where you're out to get the best score in your selected event.

Arcade is where this game truly takes place. You must compete in each of the events and qualify in each to proceed. You may find several of the events easy, but there's bound to be at least one that will prove a challenge to you.

If you manage to score yourself a world record in one of the events, then the game will save the replay as well as your top scores on your memory card. Do you want to show your friends that you can beat the absolute best? Then go ahead. The replay is exactly the same as the replay you see when you win the event.



MASHING ACTION

At the start of each event you are presented with a small screen that explains what buttons you need to press to perform the various actions. It's here that you realise that you don't need your D-pad or analogue thumbsticks - only the four action buttons.

Most of the events require you to do some serious button mashing too, so if you have an old cruddy standard controller, you may be wise to use that rather than demolishing your newer ones. Wrist and finger cramps are common with this game, so be warned.

What is nice though is that there is a mixture of action types. For example, the rowing implements the "button mash" differently. In this event, it is all about the timing as you need to hit the □ and ○ buttons as the appropriate paddle pushes through the water. Mistime it and you lose precious momentum.



REALISTIC GRAPHICS

The graphics and the animation have both been done extremely realistically. Each and every player has a high polygon count with realistic textures bringing them to life as they breathe, compete and celebrate a win, as well as experiencing despair at a disqualification.

All of the players vary in their clothing and model sizes. You may see one sprinter with quite beefy legs and wearing shorts, while next to him will be someone with bike pants and spindly legs and much broader shoulders.

We would have liked to see more events to choose from in *International Track & Field 2*, but given the graphical beauty of this game coupled with the solid programming behind the events that did make it in, you can't blame Konami for producing this title that deserves to be on every Olympics-loving household's mantlepiece.

Andrew Parsons



GAME FEATURES

-  Memory Card
-  Dual Shock Compatible
-  Multi Tap Adaptable 1-4 Players



EVENTS

EVENT 1: MEN'S 100 METRE SPRINT

A dash along the track to see who is the fastest man in the world.

EVENT 2: MEN'S LONG JUMP

Three chances to qualify by jumping the minimum distance.

EVENT 3: MEN'S JAVELIN

The javelin event gives you three attempts to get the right combination of speed and throwing angle.

EVENT 4: MEN'S HAMMER THROW

Similar to the javelin, this event is complicated by having to time the release of the ball as well as strength and angle.

EVENT 5: MEN'S POLE VAULT

Charge in and press and hold the action button when the timing bar's right until you make it over the bar.

EVENT 6: MEN'S CLEAN AND JERK

A combination of button mashing to establish strength and the right timing to get the actions right.

EVENT 7: WOMEN'S HORSE VAULT

Pick the jump you think you can land. No slamming of your controller needed, just the correct combination of buttons and at the right time.

EVENT 8: WOMEN'S 50 METRE FREESTYLE

Similar to the 100 Metre Sprint, this event shows who can press buttons the quickest.

EVENT 9: WOMEN'S 3 METRE SPRINGBOARD

The diving component is akin to the Horse Vault where you select your trick, hit buttons to get the timing right and then again to perfect your entry into the pool.

EVENT 10: MEN'S 1 KILOMETRE TIME TRIAL

It's just you against the clock as you cycle as hard as you can for 4 laps around the circuit.

EVENT 11: MEN'S CYCLE PURSUIT

The typical slowdown, speedup cycling you see at the Olympics with the hard dash at the end that leaves your fingers aching.

EVENT 12: MEN'S CANOEING

You need to time your paddling just right if you want to even qualify in this event.

STATION

■ **OVERALL:** Provides a little of what it is like to compete in the Olympics and is well positioned to take Gold

| | | |
|----------------------|------|--|
| ■ GRAPHICS: | ★★★★ | Well defined models animated realistically |
| ■ SOUND: | ★★★★ | The crowd and announcers make you feel like you're there |
| ■ GAMEPLAY: | ★★★ | A range of events, but nothing complicated in terms of control |
| ■ DIFFICULTY: | ★★★ | The game provides a good range of difficulty levels for all comers |
| ■ LIFESPAN: | ★★ | This is a party game. Single player mode is still enjoyable |

84
PERCENT






AMERZONE

The Amazing Amazon's American zone...

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
Microids
- **Developer**
Visual Impact
- **Genre**
Adventure
- **Release Date**
Out now
- **Players**
One
- **No. of CD's**
Two
- **Expectations**
Intriguing adventure game with ecological, South American theme.

GAME FEATURES

-  Memory Card
-  Mouse Compatible
-  Standard Controller



Point and click, travel and retrieve, yes, yes, but where are the big scary monsters, the one-legged green apes with bad bladders and short tempers?

This 3D graphical adventure from Visual Impact promises a revolutionary new feature! 360 degree vision! Unfortunately, the way this feature is achieved is by pasting together four 2D "walls", and bending the edges as you turn. Hmm...

The basic premise behind the game is that you are a journalist who has gone to a creepy and mysterious lighthouse to meet a reclusive old natural scientist. He gasps a dying request that you restore the balance in a fictional south American country and, being the kind of high-minded and ethical individual who chooses journalism as a career, you naturally accept.

Some of the things that you get to do in *Amerzone* involve returning the egg of a great white bird (with no legs of course!) to a tribe of native Amerzonians. These missions usually require you to solve a bundle of point and click puzzles.

GRAPHICAL ADVENTURE WITH PLOT?

The gameplay should be familiar to anyone who has played *Myst* or one of its clones. Many die-hard adventure gamers from the days of *Zork* and *Planetfall* used to say that such games weren't "real" adventures, because there was no storyline: just a bunch of random puzzles thrown together. *Amerzone*, however, really does have a story behind it, which is gradually revealed as you progress through the game.

Unfortunately, if you have become accustomed to high-definition, true 3D graphics of *Myst* and its kin, the inclusion of the storyline may not be much of a consolation.

The pseudo 3D nature of the graphical presentation isn't going to fool nor impress anyone for long. On the up side, the game does reward you with an impressive number of FMV sequences, all of which ties the story together very well.

PROBLEMS WITH ENGLISH?

There are a few gripes to be had with the game, however. It has been translated from a foreign language, and consequently there are some logical and grammatical errors in the English. It's not enough to prevent you from understanding what they're trying to say, but in a game where atmosphere is vital, it disrupts the sense of immersion in the game world.

And speaking of atmosphere, the music, while reasonably appropriate, is repetitive and becomes irritating. Loading time between locations is a bit slow, particularly for a game where some puzzles involve travelling between distant locations. This rapidly becomes tedious - a "jump" feature for previously visited, accessible locations would have been very helpful. All in all, it's hardly a sterling example of the genre, but it's not awful, either.

Gus Hungerford

STATION

■ **OVERALL:** Involving, intriguing, but sadly also frustrating and annoying.

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----|---|
| ■ GRAPHICS: | ★★ | Worth four for the FMV, one for the rest |
| ■ SOUND: | ★★★ | Grating music, but good voice acting |
| ■ GAMEPLAY: | ★★ | Niggles aside, a very engaging game |
| ■ DIFFICULTY: | ★★★ | Puzzles require patience and perseverance, but not genius |
| ■ LIFESPAN: | ★★ | It'll keep you going, but you won't finish it more than twice |

67
PERCENT

SUIKODEN II

Sweekod... Syooko... Sooie... Some old RPG gets a sequel

FACT FILE

- Publisher
Konami
- Developer
Konami
- Genre
RPG
- Release Date
TBA
- Players
One
- No. of CD's
One
- Expectations
Friendship, Deceit, Betrayal, Lost loved ones, basically the usual stuff.



Their eyes are always far too big. Tres cute!



"I feel but a shadow of my former self"



Yes, but how pleased does she look to be receiving harrassment at present?

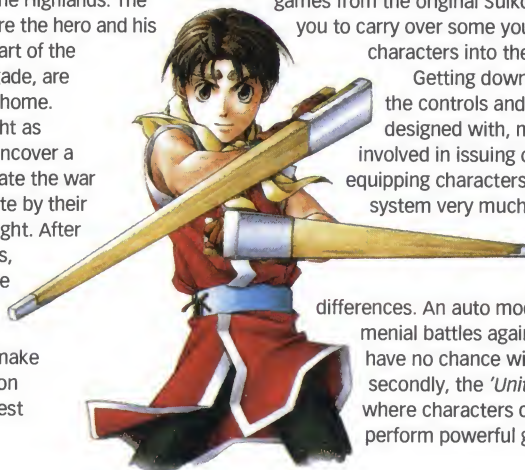
GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible

Like with any good book, the more you read, the harder it is to put down. The same also applies to any good role-playing game. The more you play it, the harder it becomes to turn it off and put it away. *Suikoden II* is a classic example of that and as of writing this review I haven't yet turned off my PlayStation.

The setting for the game is several years after the original *Suikoden*. The war is at an end with a signing of the peace agreement between the City-State and the Highlands. The game picks up where the hero and his best friend, Jowy, part of the Highland Youth Brigade, are preparing to return home.

On their last night as soldiers, the boys uncover a conspiracy to escalate the war against the City-State by their own Prince Luca Blight. After fleeing for their lives, they vow to stop the conspiracy and embark on journey that will see them make new friends, question their loyalties and test their friendship.



INVOLVING GAMEPLAY

The heart of *Suikoden II*'s gameplay is in the deeply involving and well-written story. The game also encourages you to recruit as many of the 100s of characters in the game to join your side. Not only is this an element of the story, but it also gives you access to a large pool of characters from which you can choose members for your party.

Additionally, at the start of the game, you are given the option of loading your save games from the original *Suikoden*, allowing you to carry over some your favourite characters into the latest chapter.

Getting down to the gaming, the controls and menus are well designed with, minimal fuss involved in issuing orders or equipping characters. The battle system very much your standard turn-based routine, but with 2 unique

differences. An auto mode is included for menial battles against groups who have no chance winning; and secondly, the 'Unite' command where characters can team up and perform powerful group attacks.

IMPRESSIVE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

The graphical designs and artwork for the cut scenes are nothing short of exceptional. The opening title is a testament to that, but it's unfortunate that there are so few during the game. Most of the in-game visuals employ 2D character sprites over 2D backgrounds.

It only switches to 3D during an encounter for which the special effects are second only to *Final Fantasy*. The musical score has to be one of the best yet. The orchestral compositions enhance the mood and emotions of every scene.

The quality of the translation for *Suikoden II* is also very good compared to a lot of other Japanese RPGs that have made it into the Western market. Most others have either been translated literally or generally have very bad English. Considering that the heart of any RPG lies in its story and dialogue, it's heartening to know that the good translation enhances the level of enjoyment to such a greater degree.

Suikoden II doesn't break new ground in the genre of RPG's, nor does it pretend to. Nonetheless, there are hours of gaming to be had, playing out the storyline with its varying side-missions and interacting with its plethora of characters. Anyone looking for a 'worthwhile' experience - look no further.

Aaron Lai

STATION

■ **OVERALL:** *Suikoden II* makes it hard to stop playing and go to sleep.

- **GRAPHICS:** ★★★★★ Classically styled combination of 2D art and 3D action scenes
- **SOUND:** ★★★ Wonderful musical score. Average sound effects
- **GAMEPLAY:** ★★★ Engaging storyline thanks to the hundreds of characters
- **DIFFICULTY:** ★★ It is almost too easy
- **LIFESPAN:** ★★★ You will play it to the end and then maybe again

83
PERCENT

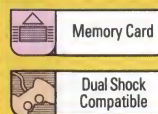
FACT FILE

■ **Expectations**
It's a race against
obscurity. Dodge
vomit, herpes and
flying secretion at
all costs.



A big friendly arrow points you in the right direction should you somehow lose yourself in a race

GAME FEATURES



Arthur Adam



STATION

| | | |
|----------------------|------|---|
| ■ GRAPHICS: | ★★ | Akin to grinding your eyeball against a cheese grater |
| ■ SOUND: | ★★★ | "Screw you guys, I'm going home..." |
| ■ GAMEPLAY: | ★ | Could have been something, instead it's nothing |
| ■ DIFFICULTY: | ★★★★ | Difficult to want to play |
| ■ LIFESPAN: | ★ | Shorter than the most ephemeral of fads |

52
PERCENT

JURASSIC PARK WARPATH

Tekken meets Gex in the PlayStation's latest fighting title

FACT FILE

- Publisher
Electronic Arts
- Developer
Electronic Arts
- Genre
Fighting
- Release Date
Out Now
- Players
One or two
- No. of CD's
One
- Expectations
Should do better than the ill-fated Primal Rage games ever did.

GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible



Though the dinos all look splendid, some are sized down to make them roughly equal in strength



You'll find many unconventional moves to use

Many moons ago, before man made the unfortunate mistake of crawling from the oceans, there lived terribly large lizard-like creatures. Many of these towering behemoths were built to fight, with muscles tightly packed beneath tough leathery skins and razor sharp teeth and claws for tearing and rupturing.

It's sad then that these overgrown lizards who ruled the world were wiped out due to some pansy, anti-climatic 'dino-flu' or change in world temperature. We can only speculate what they may have looked like and how they behaved. Regardless, their immense structures and varied forms have captured our

imaginations, so much so that books, movies and video games have been made about them. One such game is *Jurassic Park Warpath*.

MORE THAN ONE WAY TO SKIN A DINOSAUR
Not dissimilar to Atari's *Primal Rage*, *Jurassic Park Warpath* is basically a beat 'em up that is commanding dinosaurs instead of your regular anthropoid fighters. Rather than extravagant martial arts manoeuvres, you will have to bite, claw, tail whip, slash and then stab your opponent into submission.

There are up to fourteen dinosaurs to choose from, most resembling the two-legged, upright type. Size doesn't seem to matter that much in *Jurassic Park Warpath* as far as dinosaur types are concerned. Even T-Rex appears underrated next to the others, especially the Raptor who is about the same size.

Other than the standard moves such as attack, sidestep and block, you can pull off combos, such as flipping your enemy into the air and then head-butting them as they fall.

There are grapple moves that allow for flipping enemies over your back and opportunities to push a foe into an electric fence or exploding box. This may all sound quite spiffy, but gracelessly none of it is needed. I managed to finish the game three



times using various dinosaurs by using two simple steps.

Step one: jump forward.

Step two: Whilst in the air, slash. Funnily enough, those instructions make up the shortest play-guide you will ever see. This is because that is all that is required to finish the game.

NO CIGARS THIS TIME 'ROUND.

Visually, *Jurassic Park Warpath* is quite special. The dinosaur's look convincing enough, with detailed skins decorated in a manifold of colours. Their animations are fluid and believable. Small touches like chest movement in breathing and tapping toe claws on the ground add greatly to the atmosphere. The claws even become bloodstained after slashing. The backgrounds should be familiar to anyone who has seen any of the Jurassic Park movies.

But at the end of the day, the flash dinosaur graphics and persuasive sounds aren't enough to save *Jurassic Park Warpath* from extinction. The fact that completing the game easily will leave little impelling force in going back for more. *Jurassic Park Warpath* does have some saving grace, as a game with a friend is more than fun. This could have been so much more. Stick to the *Street Fighters* and *Tekkens*.

Arthur Adam

STATION

■ **OVERALL:** An attempt at something different that is encumbered by effortless gameplay.

- **GRAPHICS:** ★★★★★ Some marvellous little animations for atmosphere
- **SOUND:** ★★★ You feel just like you're in the movies
- **GAMEPLAY:** ★★ Unbalanced characters and cheap fighting tactics
- **DIFFICULTY:** ★ You can finish the game with a grand total of 2 moves
- **LIFESPAN:** ★★ Has potential as a multiplayer game

71
PERCENT

FOX SPORTS NHL CHAMPIONSHIP 2000

Fox Sports injects its own brand of excitement into ice hockey

FACT FILE

- Publisher
Activision
- Developer
Radical
- Genre
Ice Hockey
- Release Date
Out now
- Players
One to eight
- No. of CD's
One
- Expectations
Another ice hockey title? Hopefully something different to what EA Sports and 989 Sports annually bring us.



GAME FEATURES

- Memory Card
- Dual Shock Compatible
- Multi Tap Adaptable
1-8 Players

Although ice hockey isn't a big sport in Australia, where winter sports involve footballs, footballs and footballs, our gaming market is seeing an endless stream of NHL titles flooding the market. They must sell really well, or otherwise someone in marketing isn't doing their job.

Regardless, Radical Entertainment have produced their second FOX Sports game for the PlayStation, and thankfully this one doesn't blow goats (check issue #9 for the low-down on their pitiful first attempt, FOX Sports NBA 2000).

FOX SPORTS ATMOSPHERE

The first thing you'll notice with *NHL Championship 2000* is that once again, Radical have created a game with an excellent feel for the FOX Sports atmosphere. After the adrenalin-pumping FMV, featuring many NHL players being slammed into walls there's the game intro, which features adrenalin-pumping music and some (you guessed it) adrenalin-pumping fireworks!

Usually I skip these game-intro screens, but with *NHL Championship 2000* I found myself sitting through them for each game. There are a few variations on the music and fireworks / laser light shows, which is a very cool thing indeed, and the commentary team introduces



each game in a very realistic (and professional) manner. Not being a follower of NHL it was also quite educational as they talked about each goalie's strengths and weaknesses.

The game intro is also where you first notice the high standard of graphics in *NHL Championship 2000*. As the players skate around on the ice and the camera zooms in and out on the goalies, you can see that each character looks pretty damn good, and moves very fluently too.

GAMEPLAY FEARS

Now all of these features don't mean jack if the gameplay smells. And to tell you the truth, at this point I was scared - everything was pointing towards the game being a

disappointment. The pre-game presentation was great and the commentary was awesome, but it was exactly the same with FOX Sports NBA 2000. Thankfully though, once the game started all my fears were gone.

While the game mightn't feature the blistering pace that you'll find in *NHL 2000*, it's still more than adequate. Each player is well animated, and while they don't move as quickly as hoped, they still look very realistic.

There is also an assortment of different shots to attempt instead of the usual slap-shots, and it is actually more of a simulation than any other ice hockey game that is currently on the market.

While the game is a sim at heart, there are a few bits and pieces that will still keep the casual gamers keen. Fighting is in there, but unfortunately it's like the fighting system used in every other hockey game - button-mashing. Also, when you do a particularly hard shot at goal, the puck will leave a "vapour trail", which while looking cool, does seem a little out of place in this simulation environment.

NHL Championship 2000 is the game that NHL fans need to get. Of course, it lacks the polish of EA Sports' NHL series, but Radical haven't had almost a decade to get it right. As a first-effort it's amazing. Sports fans, don't overlook this title.

Wesley Willis

STATION

OVERALL: More for NHL fans, but still enough there for the rest of us.

- GRAPHICS: ★★★★★ Arenas look superb and each player moves and looks attractive
- SOUND: ★★★ As usual, commentary team is up there with the best
- GAMEPLAY: ★★★ Not as slick as NHL 2000, but still good. Certainly more technical
- DIFFICULTY: ★★★★★ Aimed more at the sim fan than the casual gamer
- LIFESPAN: ★★★ Season play and the world league will keep NHL fans occupied

85

PERCENT



RENEGADE RACERS

Renegades of fashion, road rules, and decency generally

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
Interplay
- **Developer**
Promethean Designs
- **Genre**
Racer
- **Release Date**
TBA
- **Players**
One to eight
- **Features**
Memory card
Dual Shock

Let's cut to the proverbial chase: *Renegade Racers* has absolutely nothing going for it. The graphics are fine but not out of the ordinary. The sound is grating, and the track selection minimal. Don't be fooled when you start up Arcade mode and see "1 of 40 Races" - out of the first 7 races, 5 of them take place on the same track!

It is one of those titles that tries to make fun of itself by having the character's heads larger than the craft they are piloting and this is probably the only amusing thing in the entire game. You feel like you are travelling at a snail's pace and even the speed powerup only adds to the aggravation.

The developers have tried to do something different by providing different race modes but because of the order of the races, it only adds to the whole ordeal. Together with the normal race against time and opponents, are tracks to test your jumping ability and also



Check out the rude haircut!



Doesn't compare to Crash Team Racing

the stereotypical "collect the items before time runs out" sessions.

Multiplayer or "Party Mode" gave us hope as it allowed you to have up to 8 players. Unfortunately, our excitement was dashed when we realised that not only was it a one on one round robin tournament, but that you

had to play every player which adds up to an enormous number of games. Overall, you would be best to steer well clear of this unassuming title - it is not a renegade at all. At best, it is the black sheep of the B-grade racing family.

Rhys Jacobssen

STATION

■ **OVERALL:** A bad concept realised in a bad title. Keep away for your own sanity.

| | | |
|----------------------|-----|---|
| ■ GRAPHICS: | ★★★ | Bland circuits mixed with some outrageous characterisations |
| ■ SOUND: | ★★ | The music grates within minutes while the voices last a little longer |
| ■ GAMEPLAY: | ★★ | Race, use powerups, jump. What else is there in life? |
| ■ DIFFICULTY: | ★★ | Some races are difficult - not sure if that's because they're boring |
| ■ LIFESPAN: | ★ | Heh, coaster time |

32

PERCENT

BEAST WARS: METALS

The Transformers take it to the streets!

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
Takara
- **Developer**
Takara
- **Genre**
Fighting
- **Release Date**
TBA
- **Players**
One or two
- **Features**
Memory card
Dual Shock

For those who don't know, *Beast Wars* is an off-shoot of the Transformers series of the 1980s. Instead of robots transforming into vehicles, they mutate into animals. Metals are a sub-class of these lycanthropic shape-changers, and the cartoon series is one of the more popular ones in Japan.

Now, we are threatened with the release of a PSX title based on these monstrosities, particularly Convoy, Rhinox, QuickStrike, Taurus, Rampage, Silverbolt and several others. The main game has you fighting in a series of one on one battles for access to other arenas.

All of the characters have multiple attack modes and it is this that gives it appeal. Besides punching and kicking, various weapons are also accessible. Of course, each character can transform into their respective animal form and perform a different series of attacks which provides a minor strategic element where you need to work out the best attacking and



Six limbs on your back can be an advantage

defensive modes for each opponent. The typical multiplayer and training modes are present and round the entertainment on offer in *Beast Wars: Metals*. Fans should check it out, while others looking for a new fighting game may be a little disappointed.

Rhys Jacobssen



STATION

■ **OVERALL:** If you're new to fighting games, it may not be the title to introduce you to this form of entertainment.

| | | |
|----------------------|-----|--|
| ■ GRAPHICS: | ★★★ | Nothing out of the ordinary |
| ■ SOUND: | ★★★ | Satisfying thuds and gunshots |
| ■ GAMEPLAY: | ★★★ | Follows the tried and true formula |
| ■ DIFFICULTY: | ★★ | If I can win it, so can you |
| ■ LIFESPAN: | ★★ | Multiple attack modes entice replayability |

72

PERCENT

GUILTY GEAR

It is about time we got a 2d fighter with instant kills and cool fatalities

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
GT Interactive
- **Developer**
Arc System Works
- **Genre**
2D Fighting
- **Release Date**
Out now
- **Players**
One or two
- **Features**
Memory Card
Dual Shock

Developed by Arc System Works, *Guilty Gear* is a very old-fashioned 2D beat 'em up that runs along the same lines as your average *Street Fighter* game. The difference, however, is that whilst most developers have difficulty in making a 'smooth' 2D PlayStation game, *Guilty Gear* was one of the first to do a pretty darned good job of it.

Originally released in Japan in late 1998, *Guilty Gear* placed you in control of an eclectic cast of otherworldly characters, each of whom wield magical powers of mass destruction. Your mission: defeat all who oppose you and uncover the secret of the *Guilty Gear*.

Most people will know that 2D fighting games are historically poor on the PlayStation. *Guilty Gear* appears to be the exception, not only featuring silky-smooth animations, large sprites, and vibrant colours, but also super-fast load-times that put other similar titles to shame.



Guilty Gear also features one of the best 2D fighting engines ever made, allowing dashes, counters, charged super moves, extra super moves, and mid-air acrobatics! It basically contains every conceivable move from both the *Street Fighter* and *King of Fighters* games (without the character switching, of course),

making it one of the most fast-paced and dynamic 2D fighting games on the PlayStation.

There are only two main areas where this game is spoiled. Firstly, there are fatality manoeuvres that can be executed at any time during a match. In other words, if you kill your opponent in the first round, there won't be a second round. Secondly, the game is pretty late - and the overall look and feel of the game does look a tad dated. If you look past these shortcomings, *Guilty Gear* is the definitive 2D fighting title to get, period.

Kevin Cheung



STATION

■ **OVERALL:** An indication that local distributors should act on these titles just a little faster.

| | | |
|----------------------|------|--|
| ■ GRAPHICS: | ★★★★ | High quality animations, great special effects and camera work |
| ■ SOUND: | ★★★ | Questionable soundtrack, but the rest is great |
| ■ GAMEPLAY: | ★★★★ | The perfect fighting engine, marred by the fatalities |
| ■ DIFFICULTY: | ★★ | Easy in one player, better with friends |
| ■ LIFESPAN: | ★★ | No other modes to keep your interest |

85

PERCENT

WAR OF THE WORLDS

H G Wells' tactful classic is translated into a tactless shoot em up

FACT FILE

- **Publisher**
GT Interactive
- **Developer**
Pixelogic/Rage UK
- **Genre**
War Action
- **Release Date**
Out now
- **Players**
One
- **Features**
Memory Card
Dual Shock

The PC version of this action/strategy title came out a year ago and didn't survive on the shelves for very long. 11 months later, the PlayStation has been graced with a version that's been re-worked to be more suitable for a console. The resulting game seems to be much more action oriented while retaining the flavour of the PC version.

True to the original HG Wells' story, the Martians come to attack primitive (the year's 1898) Earth. You are in control of the Earth forces ready to repel these super

advanced aliens from your home.

Unfortunately, even though you get missives from HQ, it appears that you are alone in the battle. Even when you get messages about

reinforcements, you shouldn't count on them

at all. The first mission you undertake turns out to be a training run.

You alternately drive a lorry, shoot balloons out of the sky, drive a tank, shoot more balloons, and surprise(!) the Martians arrive and interrupt your play. It's a nice attempt having to switch between gun emplacements and combat vehicles but it just isn't able to hide the lacklustre controls and designs.



There are plenty of war simulations out there that blow this one away, such as *Dune 2000* or *Red Alert*. Don't be fooled into thinking this one's a classic, for it isn't. Alternatively Jeff Wayne's soundtrack provides far greater value for money, and it's only half the price.

Andrew Parsons

STATION

■ **OVERALL:** If you feel you must get this game, do yourself a favour - RENT IT.

| | | |
|----------------------|------|---|
| ■ GRAPHICS: | ★★★ | Clean 3D models of alien craft make up for the lack elsewhere |
| ■ SOUND: | ★★★ | Enjoyable listening to the musical again, but that's where it stopped |
| ■ GAMEPLAY: | ★★ | Point and shoot, drive and shoot |
| ■ DIFFICULTY: | ★★★★ | Badly implemented controls make this game harder |
| ■ LIFESPAN: | ★ | If you buy this game, you'll persevere through the training missions |

52

PERCENT

airpad

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MODERN entertainment

Taking bolder steps into home entertainment.



Humour. Fear. Romance. Suspense. These are traditionally the hallmarks of television and Hollywood films, but how often are they ever associated with the humble videogame? Now go on and admit it: videogames are just as much a part of your life as television and movies. You had just as good a scare in *Dino Crisis* and *Resident Evil 3* as when you watched *'I Still Know What You Did Last Summer'*, there was no way Jackie Chan could fight as well as you in *Tekken 3*, and *Final Fantasy VIII*? Well... there's nothing like it. These games stand on the new frontier of interactive entertainment, testing the waters of cinematic action in completely new ways. As interactive entertainment nears the same visual and directorial excellence of your average night at the flicks, the question now is where they'll eventually lead to in future.

The Evolution of Home Entertainment

In the early 20th century, books, magazines, and periodicals were the popular form of private recreation. With only words to work with, a person's enjoyment of a book was limited only to his or her imagination. And in turn, a reader's enjoyment could be skillfully manipulated by the author's creativity and command of words. Some of these written works could be supplemented by pictures, which further stimulate the visual senses and encourage the reader to be more imaginative in his or her interpretation of the text.

When radio was introduced into the family household, it opened up a fresh new approach in entertainment, allowing audiences to interpret things through sound. Through a clever combination of narration and sound effects, audiences could be captivated by entire plays. One of these classics was the performance by Orson Welles of the H.G. Wells classic, *War of the Worlds*, which was so compelling and convincingly executed that masses of people ran out on to the streets thinking that the earth was being invaded by hulking martian ships.

When motion pictures were born, they were not accompanied sound. But the fact that recognisable

people and objects were moving around on the screen breathed new life into the entertainment industry. It offered creators the ability to tell a story in the way they intended, and they were made even more memorable for the fact that people generally are more receptive to visual stimuli.

We might take motion pictures for granted, but imagine how difficult it must have been for Parisians who were watching a steam train coming towards them for the first time: the entire audience ran screaming from the theatre, believing that they were actually about to be hit by the train! By the time sound was added to motion pictures, the equation was complete.

Beyond Sight and Sound

The next question was obviously where the entertainment industry could develop from there. It was clear that television and film were limited to sight and sound, and various attempts were made at incorporating touch, smell, and taste. At one point, people were considering the prospects of *"smell-o-vision"*, which later bit the dust when cross-marketing attempts with *Scratch'n Sniff* cards in magazines didn't work. Funnily enough, this marketing ploy is being tried yet again with the release of *Gran Turismo 2*, where scratching the disc will produce the smell of burnt rubber... like we really needed to smell that.

Enter the videogame, which added *'touch'* to the equation. Press a button, and the little man on the screen jumped. Jump to the end of the screen, and you were rewarded with some fireworks. As they began to involve more controls and more buttons, videogames came to be known as a provider of *'interactive entertainment'* - where you could control the outcome of the game.

Sadly, understanding videogames required a completely different form of interpretation to any other form of entertainment, just as motion pictures did to, say, books. If a camera was focussing on the gallant hero running up the stairs and then abruptly switched scenes to the evil villain in his lair, it would not be

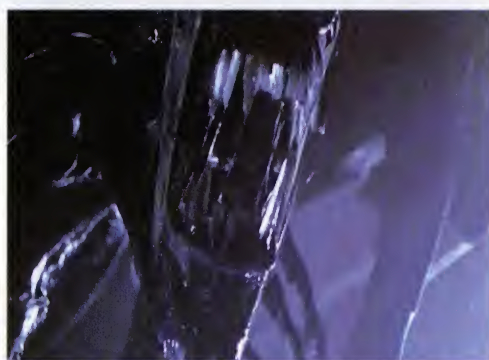
obvious to motion picture *'newbies'* what is going on. It takes a completely different level of thinking to appreciate that the scene with the hero and the scene with the villain are happening simultaneously.

By the same token, it would not be obvious to a videogame newbie that you're meant to walk from the left hand side of the screen to the right. It becomes even more confusing for them when they've walked to the extreme right of the screen, and they magically re-appear on the left hand side of a new screen! Energy bars are an entirely different nightmare altogether. Therefore, in order not to lose its audience in a sea of incomprehensible conceptualism, game developers fashioned their products to mimic the popular ideas and



Separated at birth: Indiana Jones and Lara Croft

Undoubtedly one of the most famous film-to-console comparisons in the industry, everyone was quick to jump at the opportunity to be involved with the woman dubbed, in some circles, *'Indiana Jane'*. Marketed as a rollercoaster archaeological adventure, the similarities of the idea to the *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, the *Temple of Doom*, and the *Last Crusade* were too hard to resist.



concepts of the day. That is, action games, platform games, games with guns and violence, movie tie-ins - things that resemble ideas in popular and mass culture.

This is why society at large will automatically recognise a game like Tony Hawk Skateboarding: it involves action and activities that we are familiar with in every day life. The same goes for Medal of Honour or even Dino Crisis, especially if you've seen Jurassic Park and the odd Rambo film. A 'concept game' like Mr. Domino or Tetris isn't as immediately striking. This explains why there is an apparent overlap in the appeal of motion pictures and videogames.

It's clear from titles like Resident Evil 3 and Silent Hill that game developers are adopting the same brand of storytelling and cinematic direction as their Hollywood counterparts. In hindsight, it's an approach that videogame developers have been taking since the early days of 8-bit gaming. All that was stopping them 20 years ago were hardware limitations, such as only being able to display a handful of pixels on screen at a time.

Nowadays, we're watching incredible CG scenes from Final Fantasy VIII and even enjoying entire CG-based films like Toy Story 2. All that's really left is for this incredible standard of graphics to make its way to real-time gaming, which would really bring home the concept of 'interactive entertainment'.

From Cinema to Consoles to Cinema

Some of the best videogames in history have been inspired by cinema. Speedball 2, the ultra-violent and ultra-popular sporting game of the Amiga era was inspired by the 1975 James Caan flick, Rollerball. Speedball 2 was so successful that it spawned numerous other future-sports games, all unsuccessful, which gave birth to the popular industry phrase that "all future-sports games suck... except Speedball". Thank goodness we'll be getting Speedball 2100 later this year. By the same token, the road kill mayhem presented in

the Carmageddon games can be said to have been inspired by the classic film, Death Race 2000, starring David Carradine and a very young Sylvester Stallone.

These days, it's hard to tell who inspired what. Sci-fi action films like Wing Commander are inspired directly by the PC game; while films like EXistenZ, Virtuosity, and even Lawnmower Man embrace the concept of a mass videogames culture. The Wachowski Brothers, who produced The Matrix, are known for being inspired by videogames and anime. And yet future projects like Square's The Bouncer on PlayStation 2 features elaborate action sequences that resemble The Matrix's bullet-time effects. And to top it off, there are even rumours that there is going to be a Matrix videogame!

When you consider that quality titles like Dino Crisis and Resident Evil 3 can be as entertaining as a movie, it's clear the videogames industry has vast potential, especially now that the PlayStation 2 is on the horizon. Why? Because it can generate graphics that caused the makers of Jurassic Park to gawk at how such a tiny machine can accomplish what a room of large super-computers took to bring dinosaurs to life. Many of Hollywood's major film studios now express interest in the PlayStation 2. Because one day, you won't simply be watching Ellen Ripley blowing away those terrible Aliens. You'll be right in there controlling the action.

Enter the Politics of Entertainment

If there's anything standing in the way of interactive entertainment taking the 'next evolutionary step', it's the conservative fear that videogames represent a danger to society. You don't have to look far to find somebody who believes that videogames induce violence, or that our children should be protected from them. It has something to do with a fear of something you can't grasp, similar to the fears that currently exist in regards to the Internet being a gigantic haven for pornography, or the fears that certain LPs would send



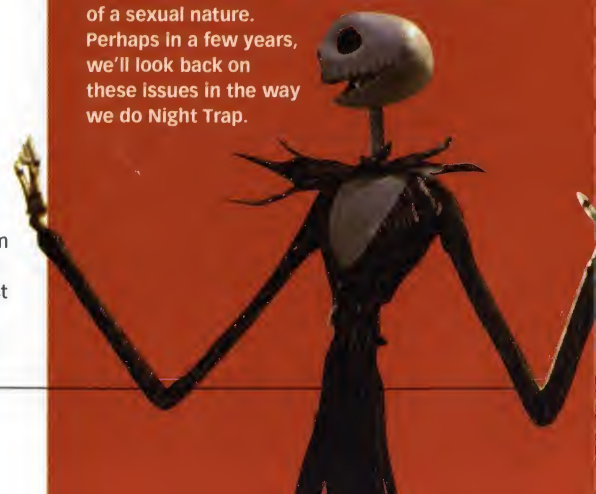
Testing the limits of Decency?

If a game wants attention, all it needs is a little sensationalism. In media terms, that often means blood, gore, violence... the more the better. That doesn't necessarily mean a better plot is involved - it means the censors are bound to go bonkers, which will cause a media frenzy if the game faces the possibility of being banned. Games that have classically been representative of this brand of violence are titles like Mortal Kombat, Street Fighter, Quake, and Doom.

In reality, however, the notion that scores of games are being banned for violent content is a myth. In fact, there have only been a small handful of games that have been 'banned' in the last 20 years, and it wasn't specifically for violent content. To illustrate, even a PC game like Kingpin - a first person shooter that featured incredibly coarse language, bodily disfigurement and dismemberment, decapitations, and loads of blood - went straight to the consumers without a hitch.

If history is any indicator of the truth, then it is that the games that are most likely to be banned are the ones that include an additional 'mature' element. This may include supernatural themes, content of a sexual nature, and anything else that the policy makers deem to reflect society's evils. That's why games like Phantasmogoria were banned, why Thrill Kill was cancelled before even going to the censors, and why a game like Grand Theft Auto is one of the most likely candidates for being banned if it featured highly realistic 3D graphics.

One would then be lead to ask, "Don't these things happen in real life anyway?" indeed they do, but it would appear that this is one of the main stumbling blocks with the censors. Take Night Trap, for instance, which appeared on the Mega-CD in the early 1990s. Moral groups tried to have this game banned because it gave you the task of hunting down a stalker who was terrorising guests in your house. If you failed, one of your guests would die. These days, the censors appear to have conceded on the serial crimes front, but they're still making a noise on games that, say, allude to drug usage or matters of a sexual nature. Perhaps in a few years, we'll look back on these issues in the way we do Night Trap.



Tim Burton's *'The Nightmare Before Christmas'* is one of the many movies that crossed the boundaries between film and videogames, embracing a highly original fantasy theme that could easily have served as the inspiration for one of Sony's cult hit, *Medievil*. In this instance, both featured a main character of the undead.



protected from things they might find offensive, and since only children play them anyway, it's reasonable to narrow down the field of censorship to anything that's acceptable for persons under 18. This is a curious proposition, considering the average age of videogame players is 20, meaning there are just as many 30 year olds playing videogames as there are 10 year olds.

Loops around the Censorship Issue

The earliest censorship tricks can be seen in *Street Fighter 2*. If you crouched and performed a heavy punch on Ken or Ryu, a massive gob of blood would come gushing out of their mouths. When it came time for the home release, the blood was changed to a vomit-brown to appease the moral groups that would've been outraged by the sight of a man spitting blood after getting punched in the guts. A game like *Mortal Kombat*, however, which featured bare-handed decapitations in the raw, had a much more difficult time and the programmers had to change them to something entirely different. *Sub Zero's* decapitation, for instance, became a case of turning the other fighter into a human popsicle and then upper-cutting it in half.

These days, the censors are much more lenient. Blood isn't quite so much a problem any more, as censors are now concerned with context. That is, was the on-screen action called for? Would it have happened in real life? Or was it just put there for gratuitous value? *Carmageddon* is a fantastic case in point, as it would certainly not be acceptable for a game to portray realistic human characters being mown down in a mash of blood and guts by a high speed vehicle. That's why they were changed to zombies, and their blood turned a shade of green.

In that context, one must really wonder about the philosophy of one of the conservative groups' more rational arguments: that younger game players aren't



Thinking ahead of its time: Dragon's Lair and Space Ace

Animator Don Bluth approached videogames from almost the completely opposite angle. Instead of producing a game that played like a movie, Don Bluth created an animated film that played like a videogame. The first notable project was *Dragon's Lair* in the late 1980s, starring a dolt of a knight named Dirk Daring whose darling wife was captured by a local dragon named Singe. As the film played through, you had to push the joystick up, down, left or right at key sequences in the game so that it would continue to play. The 'up' movement would, for instance, indicate that Dirk is meant to jump or run to the top of the screen. If Dirk is meant to use his sword, then the player could press the action button. The *Dragon's Lair* series was closely followed by *Space Ace*, which played in a similar fashion but told the adventures of a young space cadet who'd turn into a hunk of a superhero after being hit by the *Infanto Ray*.

These days, games like *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace* are often remembered as the 'joke games' of the Golden Age seeing as they were barely interactive at all as a game. As a cartoon, it was exciting for anyone who was watching.

Satanic messages if played backwards. And as if fate were playing its ironic hand again, a recent government study found that videogames did not induce violence, but promoted healthy, competitive behaviour, as well as active learning and co-ordination for individuals.

It's interesting to note that this study took place over a period of four years, meaning that it started when the PlayStation was still in its infancy and the Super Nintendo was still considered a popular system. That makes it one of the most wide-ranging studies in the world. And yet some conservative groups have already gone on record demanding the government to quash the findings of the report.

However, overcoming this brand of 'social resistance' is only the first step in overcoming an even larger hurdle: the classification system. The problem is simple: every medium of entertainment, whether it be motion pictures or magazines, has a classification regime that covers the full spectrum of age-groups, such as G, PG, MA, MA15+, R18+, and X. Videogames, however, do not enjoy quite as thorough a regime: there is no classification for a game that would warrant an age-group above MA15+. In other words, R rated games simply don't exist; and games that would warrant such a rating are banned.

The problem with this system is that it inherently assumes that videogames are played only by children. It follows, by that assumption, that children should be



taught to 'understand the consequences' of their actions in a game. Never mind the fact that this smells suspiciously like a delegation of parental guidance, but how are younger audiences supposed to appreciate the horror of motor vehicle accidents if they are encouraged to mow down endless parades of zombies?

If anything, videogames have shown an increasing trend towards showing the consequences of one's actions, violent or otherwise. In Resident Evil 3, if you fired your shotgun at a zombie, it would fall lifelessly to the floor and 'die'. If you didn't kill the zombie, you yourself would be turned into zombie-food and be reduced to a bloody mess as they ate you alive. In Bust A Groove, if you couldn't dance to the beat, you were thrown out of the competition. In Ace Combat 3, if you flew your plane into a building, your plane would explode and you'd die.

How is that any more responsible (or irresponsible, depending on your tendencies) in conveying the consequences of violence on the news, or violence on television generally? Solid Snake's ability to get through his spy-related adventure is no more incredible than Bruce Willis' exploits in, say, Die Hard or The Fifth Element.

The visual portrayal is no different as they all come from a flat screen that we view.

The worst you could accuse all visual media of is the fact that people lose a sense of reality when the violence they see is surrounded by the border of a



Japan's anime-heavy culture is filled with overlap, where animated movies like *Macross Plus* (pictured above and inset) translate perfectly into the videogame form.

television frame, and then subsequently the living room furniture and bookshelf and so on. The only difference is that television and movies are on rails. You only get to see what they want you to see. Is that a reason to single out videogames?

Where does the future lead?

For the immediate future, there's no telling where the industry will go. With the impending release of the PlayStation 2 and the incredible visual effects, we are sitting on the threshold of a new age of home entertainment. The question is whether the powers-that-be will let that new age happen in their lifetimes. Game developers are far more creative. It's obvious

from the amount of 'simulation games' that videogames are a lot more than mere shoot 'em ups and beat 'em ups: the escape from reality could be a romantic tale or an elaborate train driving simulation. On the other hand, it could include the more flamboyant and fantastic tales that resemble cult films like *From Dusk Till Dawn* or *Wild Things*. It's truly a mystery that these same people who complain about videogames can sleep at night knowing these movies are out and about.

Whatever the case may be, the players in the industry must move quickly, because one day, a machine will come out that can generate virtual realities even more striking than our television sets and DVD players. It's going to fall out of the sky and hit us all like a tonne of bricks. And don't worry - it won't kill us.

PLAYSTATION RELEASE SCHEDULE

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| GAME TITLE | DEVELOPER | DISTRIBUTOR | RELEASES |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Alien Resurrection | Fox | EA | 25 Feb 2000 |
| Armored: Project S.W.A.R.M. | - | Acclaim | 24 Feb 2000 |
| Dune 2000 | Westwood | EA | 4 Feb 2000 |
| Grandia | GameArts | Ubi Soft | Feb 2000 |
| International Track & Field 2 | Konami | GT Interactive | Feb 2000 |
| ISS Pro Evolution | Konami | GT Interactive | Feb 2000 |
| NuWrestling 1 (SLCW1) | - | Acclaim | 24 Feb 2000 |
| Superbikes 2000 | EA SPORTS | EA | 4 Feb 2000 |
| Simpsons Bowling | Fox | EA | 15 Feb 2000 |
| Theme Park World | Bullfrog | EA | 25 Feb 2000 |
| Vanishing Point | - | Acclaim | 24 Feb 2000 |
| X-Men | Activision | Activision | Feb 2000 |
| Rugby 2000 | EA SPORTS | EA | 25 Mar 2000 |
| Beatmania | Konami | GT Interactive | Mar 2000 |
| Civilization: Call To Power | Activision | Activision | Mar 2000 |
| Cricket 2000 | EA Sports | EA | Mar 2000 |
| Die Hard 2 | Fox | EA | Mar 2000 |
| Duke Nukem: Time To Kill 2 | GT Interactive | GT Interactive | Mar 2000 |
| Ford Racing | Empire | Metro | Mar 2000 |
| Formula One Championship | EA | EA | 3 Mar 2000 |
| Gauntlet Legends | Midway | Metro | Mar 2000 |
| GTA: Berlin Mission Pack | Take 2 | Jack Of All Games | Mar 2000 |
| Grudge Warriors | Take 2 | Jack Of All Games | Mar 2000 |
| Karting World Championship | Midas | Metro | Mar 2000 |
| NBA Showtime On NBC | Midway | Metro | Mar 2000 |
| Need For Speed 5 | - | - | Mar 2000 |
| Railroad Tycoon II | Take 2 | Jack Of All Games | Mar 2000 |
| Rayman 2 | Ubi Soft | Jack Of All Games | Mar 2000 |
| Space Station Silicon Valley | Take 2 | Jack Of All Games | Mar 2000 |
| State Of Emergency | Take 2 | Jack Of All Games | Mar 2000 |
| Eagle One | Infogrames | Ozisoft | Q1 2000 |
| Premier Manager 2000 | Infogrames | Ozisoft | Q1 2000 |
| Rally Masters | Infogrames | Ozisoft | Q1 2000 |
| Ronaldo V-Football | Infogrames | Ozisoft | Q1 2000 |
| Flintstones Bedrock Bowling | Ubi Soft | Jack Of All Games | Apr 2000 |
| F1 Racing Championship | Ubi Soft | Jack Of All Games | Apr 2000 |
| Riding Star | Midas | Metro | Apr 2000 |
| Darkstone | Take 2 | Jack Of All Games | May 2000 |
| Joe Blow | Take 2 | Jack Of All Games | May 2000 |
| Bass Hunter | - | Jack Of All Games | Jul 2000 |
| Commandos 2 | Eidos | Ozisoft | Jul 2000 |
| Unreal | Epic Megagames | GT Interactive | Jul 2000 |
| Airport Inc. | Take 2 | Jack Of All Games | TBC |
| Beavis & Butthead Do Hollywood | - | GT Interactive | TBC |
| Evil Dead: Ashes 2 Ashes | THQ | - | TBC |
| Fear Effect | Eidos | Ozisoft | TBC |
| Jedi Power Battles | LucasArts | - | TBC |
| Kiss | Take 2 | Jack Of All Games | TBC |
| Martian Gothic: Unification | Take 2 | Jack Of All Games | TBC |
| Prince Of Persia | Red Orb | Dataflow | TBC |
| Rogue Spear | Red Storm | Jack Of All Games | TBC |
| Spec Ops | Take 2 | Jack Of All Games | TBC |
| Spiderman | Activision | Activision | TBC |
| Tenchu 2 | Activision | Activision | TBC |
| TOCA World Touring Cars | Codemasters | Ozisoft | TBC |
| Galaga | Namco | Hasbro | Q3 2000 |
| Wipeout Director's Cut | Psygnosis | Sony | Oct 00 |
| Austin Powers | - | Jack Of All Games | Oct 2000 |

RELEASE DATES FOR THE PLAYSTATION 2:

| | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Gangsters | - | Jack Of All Games | Nov 2000 |
| Hidden & Dangerous 2 | - | Jack Of All Games | Nov 2000 |
| State Of Emergency | - | Jack Of All Games | Nov 2000 |
| Dead Or Alive 2 | Tecmo | Sony | TBC |
| Munch's Oddysee | Oddworld Inhabitants | GT Interactive | TBC |
| The Nomad Soul | Quantum Dream | Ozisoft | TBC |
| Powerstone 2 | Capcom | Ozisoft | TBC |

11 PREPLAY CONTENTS



74 STREET FIGHTER EX 2

The SF series makes its second journey into 3D, and looks smoother, brighter and faster than ever. The dozens of games in this stable have flogged the fighting game to within an inch of its life, but if you like Street Fighter, you'll love this.



76 RUGRATS 2

Little people rejoice! Fan-favourite cartoon, The Rugrats, is back for a second outing on the PlayStation. More platforming fun and plenty of mini-game madness for all. The oldies among you who were disgusted by the cuteness can ignore this.



77 VANDAL HEARTS 2

The sequel to Konami's original strategy RPG hit has finally been sighted on the horizon. Fans of Archon, Final Fantasy Tactics, chess, and other assorted turn-based strategy games should look here, because there aren't many of them.



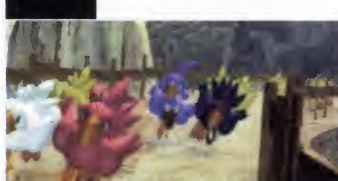
77 TNN HARDCORE

One little racing title is brave enough to surface in the face of the juggernaut known as Gran Turismo 2. With its own collection of 'super cars', this game just might stand a chance of survival.



78 DUKES OF HAZZARD

The lifestyles of southern hillbillies glamourised and writ large, this racing action game is so close to the TV series it's frightening. This title tries to capture the essence of the giant car jumps and cheesy dialogue from a 70s icon.



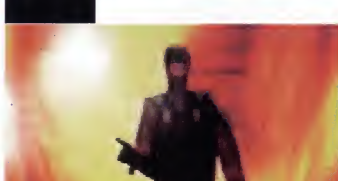
79 CHOCOBO STALLION

There's something sick about breeding giant chickens in the same way as you would breed horses... at least Square are trying to use their newfound mascot creatively by creating new genres of games.



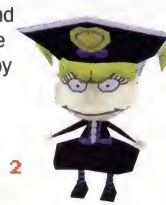
79 ALUNDRA 2

The original Alundra was the first action/RPG to hit the PlayStation, but to no avail (it was 2D). Alundra is back, and this time he's in 3D. Could be a big hit for RPG fans.



80 SYPHON FILTER 2

Gabriel Logan returns, and this time he's got some assistance from the spunky Lian Xing. This sequel looks like it will be more of the same, but it's more of the good stuff. Guns, lasers, Espionage action at its most explosive.



Street Fighter EX 2 Plus

Ken and Ryu take the 3D plunge once more!

FACT FILE

- Publisher
Capcom
- Developer
Arika
- Genre
Fighting
- Release Date
TBA
- Players
One or two

PROGRESS REPORT

- Positive Points**
- ♣ Awesome graphical update.
 - ♣ Easy to get into.
- Negative Points**
- ♣ Music belongs in the eighties.



Muscles! She's only as big as one of his legs!



"Hey, it's 8.15!" "Gotta run! Astro Boy's on!"



The original Pile Driver was too rude, so they made Zangief's victim face away from him this time

Two years ago, the original *Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha* was surrounded in a bit of controversy. Being a series that's entrenched in 2D animation, the very thought of a 3D *Street Fighter* game was abominable to many a fan.

The name was impossible to remember. Yet after the game was released, it was hailed as one of the best fighting games the PlayStation has to offer, and it now enjoys a loyal following of its own. The market life of *Street Fighter EX 2 Plus* will hopefully encounter less fuss.

WE ALL KNOW THE FIGHTING ROUTINE...

Developed by Arika in co-operation with Capcom, *Street Fighter EX 2* will be a game

that features all of Capcom's foundation *Street Fighter* characters together with a few of Arika's own creation, such as Hokuto, Skullomania, and Cracker Jack. New to the fold are Sharon, Area, Nanase, and Vulcano Rosso; as well as a couple of familiar faces such as Balrog and Sagat. Much to the delight of many fans, Snider has been given the boot.

Street Fighter EX 2 will be building on many of the foundations set by the original game. It will offer the same hybrid of 2D fighting within a 3D graphical field, but with all the trappings of improved graphics, special effects, and additional moves and options.

Set in a parallel universe of sorts to the "official" *Street Fighter* mythos, the aim of the game is still to defeat the big bad dude in the puffy red outfit, M. Bison. In order to do so, you must defeat several warriors who have agendas of their own.

FIGHTING GAME EGGS YOU ON

Our preliminary tests of *Street Fighter EX 2* ended up consuming a good few days of highly addictive and competitive gameplay, coupled with a lot of compulsive name-calling. As a

fighting game, *Street Fighter EX 2* hasn't lost any of the technical excellence of the original game.

It still features one of the most balanced fighting engines around, allowing you to chain together multiple super combos at a time. The ease with which they are executed, and the devastating damage they can do, all encourage you to play harder, to move your fingers faster, and ultimately to perform better.

The main new gameplay feature is the inclusion of the Excel Attacks. It's the equivalent of the Variable and Custom combos in *Street Fighter Alpha 2*. When you've powered up, pressing Light Punch together with Medium Kick will enable your character to fight at a greatly increased rate, allowing you to throw massive volleys of fireballs, kicks and punches in only a few seconds!

However, what's grabbed our attention the most is the improvement in the graphics. In a word, superb. It's virtually identical to the arcades, with textures so smooth you'd swear they were gouraud shaded! Complete with new camera angles and dazzling lighting effects, several different game modes, and a great training feature, *Street Fighter EX 2* has left no doubt in our minds that it'll be a fantastic title.

Kevin Cheung



You'll notice that the ugly blocky corners are all but eradicated for #2

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PLAYSTATION



MAC



PC-CDROM



CHAT



SEGA



ARCADE



NINTENDO 64

Rugrats 2: Studio Tour

How much trouble can Chucky, Angelica and the gang get up to?

FACT FILE

■ Publisher
THQ

■ Developer
N Space

■ Genre
Platformer

■ Release Date
TBA

■ Players
One to four

PROGRESS REPORT

Positive Points

♣ Much more accessibility for younger kids.

Negative Points

♣ No really obvious advances over the first title.



Dr. Evil Wannabe



Diapers of Thunder... God help us...



The first Rugrats was a surprise hit for the littlies. Hopefully this sequel will do just as well



Better than a trip to Fox Studios!



Go karting. Everyone's doing it. So should you

The first Rugrats game for the PlayStation is about 9 months old now and remains as one of the best games for younger audience. Developers THQ have retained the license and have just about finished the second in the series, *Studio Tour*.

Little has changed on the Rugrats surface. The graphics are still a combination of 3D environments and characters with their 2D textures that at times seem to be quite low quality.

The sound, both in terms of background music and voiceovers, is done basically as well as the first installment.

Whereas the first PlayStation Rugrats title had a story line and different minigames, THQ have made it easy on themselves this time. Since the kids are on a movie studio tour, all of their games are set on different movie sets, thus allowing the developers almost free rein in settings (Western, Space, etc) as well as game types (as in Race, Shooter, etc) of games.

There is a wealth of minigames available in *Rugrats 2: Studio Tour*. Races in either vehicles or on foot feature prominently, along with item collecting and shooting gallery levels. Add a simple side scrolling platformer and two 9-hole

mini-golf courses, and you have a good selection for your children.

The main game provides an introductory movie to set the scene. The kids have been brought along to a Studio Tour and manage to get themselves lost back stage where they confound a security guard with their antics. One of the kids gets accidentally locked away (I'll let you guess who), and the other kids are on the case to find the keys to the locks.

You control each character in turn in the different movie sets where they need to succeed in a range of activities to retrieve the different keys. There's certainly nothing new here and that's actually a good thing.

ACCESS THE WHOLE GAME

The multiplayer experience actually provides full access to the different events in the game. The multiplayer game can be played between 1 and 4 people, and if you have small kids who are frustrated by not being able to progress in singleplayer, this is where you will come.

Our biggest complaint about the first game was that to explain the various events and control mechanisms the player was presented with a page or two full of text. The developers have listened to the feedback and have done away with the text and replaced it with voiceovers explaining what needs to be done.

They have also listened to what worked best in the original Rugrats, and have given more of the same. So two complete 9-hole mini-golf courses have been designed and different variants on the theme of racing have been introduced.

With the engine undergoing little or no modification, some of the small niggles in the 3D animation remain, but we hope THQ will address these before final release. As it is, however, *Rugrats 2: Studio Tour* is pretty much complete and looks to be headed in the same direction as Search For Reptar was. We'll bring you a full review soon - if you have small kids, it's time to get excited again.

Andrew Parsons

Vandal Hearts II

More new strategy stuff to chew on

FACT FILE

- Publisher
Konami
- Developer
Konami
- Genre
Turn Based Strateg
- Release Date
TBA
- Players
One

There are few turn based strategy games in the local gaming market. But of those few, *Vandal Hearts II* looks to be one of the more noteworthy. The game is set during feudal times during which numerous wars have been waged. You play the role of the hero, a peasant boy who doesn't believe in the distinction between nobles and peasants.

Coming from a strong RPG background, the story elements play a large part of *Vandal Hearts II* filling in the pieces of the story between each battle. The gameplay is centred around chess style battles that take place at every stage through the game.

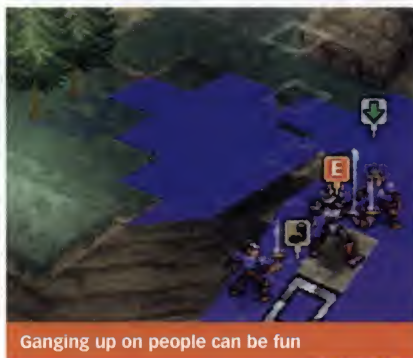
After you've made movement choices for one of your characters, it is executed at the same time as your opponent's characters. This adds a new dimension to the strategy, as when you move to attack your opponent, he or she may also be moving elsewhere at the same time.

At this stage in time, *Vandal Hearts 2* is the most promising, if not the only decent strategy title that's going to be released on the PlayStation in a long time. With graphics that easily equal the much-lamented *Final Fantasy Tactics*, it's a sure bet that fans of the genre will want to pick up this title as soon as it's out.

Aaron Lai



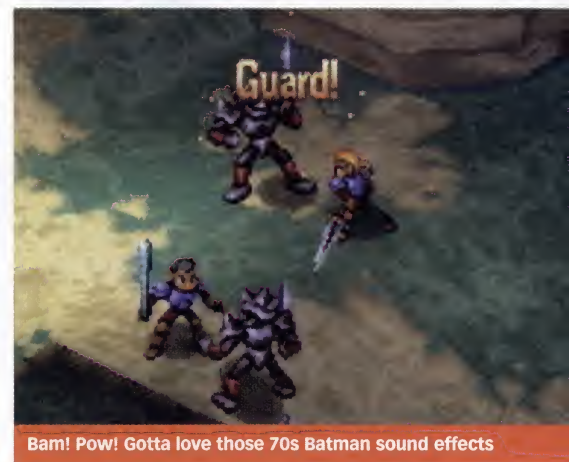
Those character portraits are awful!



Ganging up on people can be fun



Arthur shows off his Swiss Army Sword



Bam! Pow! Gotta love those 70s Batman sound effects

TNN Hardcore

Will this be eaten alive by Gran Turismo 2?

FACT FILE

- Publisher
TBA
- Developer
Eutchnyx
- Genre
Muslce Car Racing
- Release Date
TBA
- Players
One or two

Racing games are a dime a dozen on the Playstation, so when developers serve us up yet another title in this tired genre it better be unbelievable (like *Gran Turismo 2*, for example). *TNN Hardcore*, the latest game that puts you behind the wheel, has a unique enough angle - you are racing muscle cars - and it has the potential to be quite a nice title.

The build of *TNN Hardcore* that we played uses EXACTLY the same game engine as *Max Power Racing*. Identical graphics and physics, but with slightly tweaked sound to simulate the extra grunt that muscle cars have. Hopefully it will be nowhere as bad as *Max Power Racing*.

Visually *TNN Hardcore* looks alright, but if there's one thing that could be improved before the game is released it's the clipping. In some sections it's barely noticeable, but sometimes, especially in the replays, it's downright atrocious. There are some nice graphical touches though, like the car damage that occurs during the race.

Muscle car fans will be drooling over *TNN Hardcore*. If the few glitches can be cleaned up by the time it hits the shelves then it has the potential to be a very solid, second-tier racing title.

Wesley Willis



Cruise through the countryside hillbilly style



Dukes of Hazzard

The Confederate flag is usually offensive, but here it's comedy...

FACT FILE

- Publisher
SouthPeak Interactive
- Developer
Sinister Games
- Genre
Racing Adventure
- Release Date
Late March
- Players
One or two

PROGRESS REPORT

- Positive Points
 - ♣ Retro feel.
 - ♣ The variety of objects keep the gameplay interesting.
- Negative Points
 - ♣ Has unforgiving vehicle physics.
 - ♣ Graphically, the game is mediocre.



Have you ever dreamt about living the life of a redneck hillbilly, thigh slapping and possibly dabbling in a little bit of farm animal fun?

Well, that hit 70's show revolving about the adventures of two such in-bred cowboys, Luke and Bo Duke, with their vividly orange V8 motor vehicle, the General Lee, is headed for the PlayStation.

CAMERA, LIGHTS, ACTION!

Uncle Jesse's been kidnapped by two masked bandits who have just robbed the local bank and it's up to our two heroes to save him. Of course, Boss Hogg, the town's mayor, tries to pin the robbery on Luke and Bo. And so the game begins. The *Dukes of Hazzard* can be simply explained as a racing adventure.

The game is structured in a way that makes it feel like a *Dukes of Hazzard* television show in which you are a part of the action. Each stage completed is followed by cut scenes of computer generated characters of the show that tie in the story.

The opening scene depicts the Duke cousins being chased and thwarting the generically inept police officer, Roscoe P. Coltrane, by firing a few arrows into his vehicle's tires followed by a 'Yeeeeeeharr!' All of your favourite characters are here, including Daisy Duke who's dressed in a bra-sized pink top and hot shorts so tight they look like they have been spray painted on.

Each stage sees you having to complete set objectives. For example, you may have to avoid the police whilst trying to catch up baddies and pull them over. This is no easy task, as the cops will side swipe and smash into the General Lee from all angles.

The General Lee isn't as hardy as Kit from *Nightrider* and each of her panels weaken as they are rammed. However, you can at least take advantage of power-ups strewn across the country roads like nitro boosts and oil slicks. You can even pick up arrows that are fired by Luke who hangs out the General Lee's window.



"FIGHTING THE SYSTEM LIKE TWO MODERN DAY ROBIN HOODS..."

A flaw in *Dukes of Hazzard* that does arise though, is the fact that the vehicle's physics are somewhat precarious. At times, hitting an inanimate object will see the General Lee tumble at exaggerated angles, which become tiresome when constantly being mauled by a police vehicle's bull bar.

The *Dukes of Hazzard* manages to maintain its television show's atmosphere with its country style music, voice sampling and dirt road chases. And where would any *Dukes of Hazzard* episode be without the General Lee jumping across a river and the tailing cops plummeting into the water?

All of these little touches and more have been included. As the *Dukes of Hazzard* advances, you will find yourself in the seats of other various vehicles like Uncle Jesse's hotrod, Cooter's Tow truck, Daisy's Jeep and Boss Hogg's jalopy.

Although the graphics are somewhat lacking, the *Dukes of Hazzard* has enough variety to make it a fun game. Don't expect a racing game, because you will surely be disappointed. Rather, *Dukes of Hazzard* is a mixture of stages strung together by a story line. Stay tuned for a full review soon.

Arthur Adam



Chocobo Stallion

Like horse racing with less weird names

FACT FILE

■ Publisher
Squaresoft

■ Developer
Parity Bit

■ Genre
Racing/Breeding

■ Release Date
TBA

■ Players
TBA

Quick! Someone grab the shotgun! Them chocobo critters are fixin' ta take over the world! Don't believe me? Fine. You will be sorry when you wake up with a big yellow chicken looming over your bed.

Square's mascot animal is no longer content to play an ongoing cameo performance in all the Final Fantasy games. Even guest spots in games like Tobal 1 & 2 weren't enough for them and recently you might have noticed them starring in all kinds of their own titles: Chocobo Mysterious Dungeon, Chocobo Racing and now this - *Chocobo Stallion*. *Chocobo Stallion* is pretty much the same as the hugely

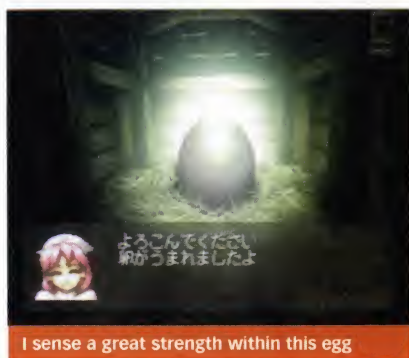
successful (in Japan anyway) horse racing game, *Derby Stallion*. Not surprising seeing it's the same development team. The only major difference is of course that you are racing and breeding chocobos instead of horses.

Gamers start with two base chocobos (a mother and a father chocobo) in order to begin a bloodline, which must be further developed by of course - more breeding. In order to pay for breeding inspections and also for making improvements to your chocobo ranch, you must of course race your chocobos at Final Fantasy inspired events such as the Odin Cup.



There are fundamentally 9 different color types of chocobos, but depending on how the player ends up growing them, the chocobo will change size and personality, allowing players to breed over 1000 varieties of chocobo. 1000 chocobos? I told you they are planning to take over.

Elton Cane



I sense a great strength within this egg



This young hatchling will be the fastest bird!



Burning round the bend at blinding speeds

Alundra 2

Another RPG falls to the overwhelming pressure to go 3D

FACT FILE

■ Publisher
Activision

■ Developer
Matrix/Contrail

■ Genre
Action RPG

■ Release Date
Autumn

■ Players
One

Once upon a time there was a game called *Alundra*. It was a 2D action RPG with lots of puzzles and lots of evil monsters to bash with your sword. It was OK. Nothing earth-shattering but nice in a kind of 16-bit way.

Now Activision have decided to release *Alundra 2*, and after playing through a few hours on the preview code I have to say I like what I see. Developers Contrail have a pretty good pedigree when it comes to RPGs, most recently doing *Climax Landers* for the Dreamcast, and *Alundra 2* shares a similar style of art direction.

All of the characters and the environments that are in *Alundra 2* are made up of some brightly coloured, well-textured polygons and it manages to be rather cute without being too childish.

Like its predecessor *Alundra* 2 is an action RPG so the exploration and fighting take part in the same kind of environments and it is just

as easy to avoid your enemies as take them on with your trusty sword.

It is not all simple slashing though. By completing various objectives in the game, like solving puzzles and playing some of the minigames, the main character Flint can learn some new moves and acquire some new abilities.

The minigames in *Alundra 2* make for quite a nice distraction too. Supposedly there are around ten in all, ranging from such beauties as a casino slot machine to driving a remote control car.

There are at least two hours of cut scenes in the game, and while the lack of action can



Step on him! Boil him! Eat his skin! Yum!

sometimes be a little bit distracting (especially after the first 10 minutes or so), the cinematography and the dialogue are top class, and give you a lot more incentive to keep playing. Look out for a local release sometime in the next month.

Elton Cane



Syphon Filter 2

Logan's run of action success blasts into the 21st century



FACT FILE

■ Publisher
989 Studios

■ Developer
Eidetic

■ Genre
Tactical action

■ Release Date
April

■ Players
One or two

PROGRESS REPORT

Positive Points

♣ More weapons, levels, options and attention to detail.
♣ Two player mode; play as a Chinese chick.

Negative Points

♣ If the graphics are too ambitious, gameplay will slow to a halt.



As we can see from these screen shots...



...the full motion sequences are still made...



...using the in-game graphics as a template

Syphon Filter was the most successful tactical espionage game of '99, edging out Metal Gear Solid with a more Hollywood style of cinematic terrorist blasting. Now a year has passed, and Gabriel Logan is back on the trail of the Syphon Filter virus across the usual travelogue of exotic locales and burning deathtraps.

Fortunately, his second escapade into the explosively sexy world of counterterrorism is accompanied by a battery of genuine improvements to the game, as well as his counterpart, the curvaceous Lian Xing.

Gabe's sexy radio contact returns from the first game, lending her own unique abilities to the fight against biological warfare. For now she is not just some disembodied voice, but a spunky third-person diva given life.

Over the games twenty odd levels, you control the appealing Xing in eight. What's more, you can also play her in the games two player deathmatch mode, a feature that finally lends the distinct Syphon Filter interface to competitive play.



Standing on top of this dying soldier, I will be out of harm's way when this truck runs him over

STITCH UP

Logan and Xing, in an original piece of storytelling, have been framed for a crime they didn't commit. So with authorities on their case they also have to take on the real criminals who're on the verge of selling Syphon Filter to a country crazy enough to use it. Spanning two discs and traversing the globe, the player will be pitted against commando and criminal alike in a race to stop a conspiracy that stretches to the highest levels of the US government.

The gameplay in *Syphon Filter 2* doesn't deviate sufficiently from the first game, or any other product for that matter, to suggest a radical new direction in gaming style. Instead, the sharp shooting precision is refined to perfection, and more effort has been placed into creating an atmospheric frame of reference. For instance, the music is recorded in MIDI format, and programmed to react to the pace of the game, responding to climactic action with intense accompaniment.

There are now 25 different weapons scattered through the game, including some interesting new curiosities like crossbows and flamethrowers to compliment the standard fare of silenced automatics and sniper rifles.

A CROWDED MARKET?

It will be impossible not to compare *Syphon Filter 2* to *Tomorrow Never Dies*, both in terms of style and content. Both offer a single player mode where the player fights through a shooting gallery of realistic environments filled with unrealistic hoods.

Both try to evoke a feeling of global treachery and peril in a groovy cyber setting.



Nightvision scopes return

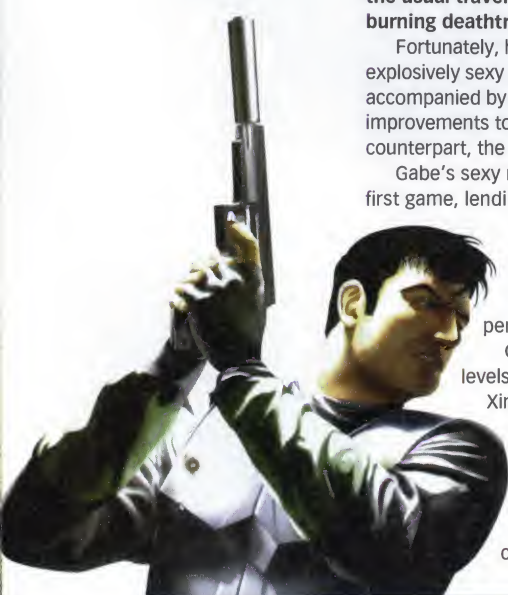


Stealth is still required to pass the level alive

Both aspired to sport a two player deathmatch mode worthy of its inclusion. And they each had a young Chinese super-babe super-spy.

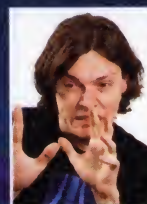
But while the last Bond game came off as a beta version that the developer sent to be mastered by mistake, *Syphon Filter 2* looks like it could be the best combat action yet on the PlayStation. Next month we will have the full review, when we will determine the fate of this game, and perhaps the world.

James Cottee



GAMES

WE WOULD RATHER FORGET



Admit it. We've all bought a game at some point that we would rather not have. These are games that, within moments of loading it into your PlayStation, you know you have made a mistake with. Or perhaps it was a game you were really looking forward to, and in spite of the hours of perseverance you put into it, you couldn't help but feel cheated. And what was the reason for your buying such a product?

Perhaps it was peer pressure. Perhaps you forgot to pay attention to the reviews in this magazine. Whatever the case may be, the ultimate kick in the teeth is that the shop won't let you return it. Bother.

That's why we have compiled a list of games we'd rather forget - the complete list of titles that bombed, disappointed us, or generally left the fans screaming for blood. Do bear in mind that not all of these games are necessarily "bad" per se, as there's always some faction of consumers who'll enjoy a particular game. These games represent all the stinkers that our loyal readers have taken the time and effort to write in to us about.

So without further delay, we present to you the PlayStation's Hall of Shame.

DODGIEST GAME TITLES



PO'ed
Does that really read "pissed off"?

Pong
No-one's going to buy it if they think it's smelly.

Breeding Stud
'Ahem' you figure it out.

Remote Control Dandy
Whatever you say, sunshine.

Cowboy Bebop
I thought he was the Warhog on Ninja Turtles...

Tail of the Sun
The sun has no tale or tail.

Test Drive 6
By now, it's not a test drive anymore.

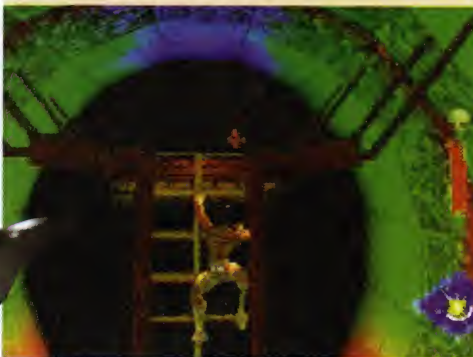
Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha
Try remembering that!

Final Fantasy VIII
You know it's not 'really' the final one.



GAMES THAT LET US DOWN

These are the games that everyone had high hopes for. They had a whole bunch of great ideas, we loved them in beta form, but somewhere along the line, something went wrong and the final product ended up severely letting us down.



Offender: Akuji The Heartless

WHO TO THANK: Crystal Dynamics???

CRAP-O-METER: █ █ █

This is the game that preceded Soul Reaver, a game that had better graphics, better controls, and better overall execution. Akuji, on the other hand, left many fans stranded with its irksome interface.



Offender: Blasto

WHO TO THANK: Sony Computer Entertainment

CRAP-O-METER: █ █ █

One of the last known works of the late Phil Hartman, Blasto was hoping to capture the essence of the old Duck Dodgers series in the Bugs Bunny cartoons. Too bad the controls and cameras were all messed up.



Offender: South Park

WHO TO THANK: Acclaim

CRAP-O-METER: █ █

Everyone loves a good bit of profanity, and first person shooters are always funny. But horde after horde after horde after horde of marauding turkeys isn't that funny.



Offender: Star Wars - Masters of Teräs Käsi

WHO TO THANK: Lucasarts

CRAP-O-METER: █ █ █

Often referred to as "Masters of Terrible-Käsi", this game attempted to be Tekken, Soul Blade, and Street Fighter all at once. They failed. Badly.



GAMES THAT GOT HYPED, BUT FIZZLED OUT

The words speak for themselves. The developers and distributors talked these games up, and we all gave them the benefit of the doubt. But when it came time for release, the final product failed.



Offender: Ridge Racer Type 4

WHO TO THANK: Namco

CRAP-O-METER: 1 1 1

This game was meant to blow away the superlative track designs and intense addictiveness of Ridge Racer. Instead, it finished within an hour and didn't inspire anyone to unlock the rest of the game.



Offender: St. Wars Phantom Menace

WHO TO THANK: Lucasarts

CRAP-O-METER: 1 1

There were Phantom Menace products for everything under the sun, from bed spreads and children's undergarments to frisbees and collapsible light-sabres. The game was no different: there to make a buck.



Offender: Deathtrap Dungeon

WHO TO THANK: Eidos

CRAP-O-METER: 1 1 1

Based on fantasy novels of the same name, Deathtrap Dungeon was meant to provide an epic adventure of swords and sorcery. The project proved too ambitious, as the game made too many concessions in all departments.



Offender: Toy Story 2

WHO TO THANK: Activision

CRAP-O-METER: 1 1

Toy Story 2, the movie, was fantastic. Toy Story 2, the game, was chuggy, unimaginative, short, and too damned easy. Fantastic value for money... not.



Offender: Spice World

WHO TO THANK: The Spice Girls

CRAP-O-METER: 1 1 1 1 1

Spice Girls = Dodgy Music. Spice Girls Game = Dodgy Music Game.



Offender: Fighting Force

WHO TO THANK: Eidos Interactive

CRAP-O-METER: 1 1 1

Billed as the 3D successor to Capcom's hugely popular 80s icon, Final Fight, they forgot to tell us was that you had no moves, no smooth frame rate, or that you'd be fighting to a repetitive, mundane bass-synth techno soundtrack all-the-way-through.



Offender: Rascal

WHO TO THANK: Psygnosis

CRAP-O-METER: 1 1

The most bland and unimaginative of all platformers, Rascal is devoid of not only challenging play but cool characters, enticing level design and a decent plot. The kid wears his baseball cap on backwards. Try harder!



Offender: Wu Tang: Taste the Pain

WHO TO THANK: Activision

CRAP-O-METER: 1 1 1

Originally drafted from the banned Thrill Kill engine, Wu Tang takes out all the charm of midgets on stilts and replaces it with gangstas. Non-intelligent gameplay.

BAD CLONES



Offender: 360

WHO TO THANK: Cryo

CRAP-O-METER: 1 1 1

A straight out rip-off of the WipeOut series, except you raced on water, and you had a mounted gun that could look backwards. Nice idea - too bad the game didn't even play half as good as WipeOut.



Offender: Fighting Force 2

WHO TO THANK: Eidos Interactive

CRAP-O-METER: 1 1 1

It takes less than a minute to see that this game is nothing but a Tomb Raider wannabe - 'wannabe' being the operative phrase here.



CHARACTERS WE LOVE TO HATE

Croc

There's nothing remotely cute about a crocodile drawn to look like a person. It just looks like it came out of a really happy Disney cartoon.

Doctor Boskonovitch

He's the hardest character to unlock in Tekken 3, and he ends up being the lamest character to use. He trips, he falls, he has a few cheap moves, but he's mostly harmless.

The Licker

In Resident Evil 2, these things were guaranteed to scare the willies out of you, and they were a real bugger to kill too.

Gex

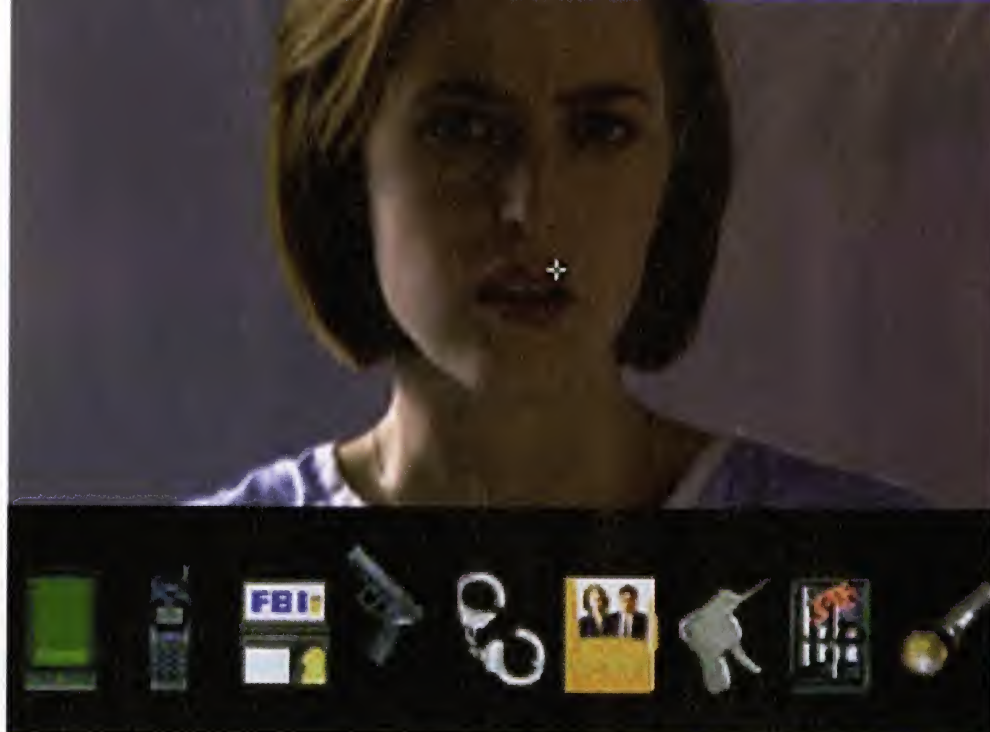
The fact that he is just another animal that runs around wasn't quite as annoying as his quippy verbalisms. Throughout his games, he will crack one bad joke after another.

Squall Leonheart

His resemblance to Leonardo Di Caprio is disturbing. What's worse is that he is also the most likely character to be mistaken for a girl, which isn't helpful if you're trying to stomach his love affair with Rinoa.

Kingsley

Okay, he's a slight step above Croc for wearing some items of clothing and donning a sword, but that doesn't change the fact that it's an animal made to resemble a person. Anthropomorphism sucks.



OLD FASHIONED STINKERS

These are the games that don't really fit into any of the above categories. The singular truth that links them together is the fact that they were all God-awful mountains of utter crap.

**Offender:** DREAMS**WHO TO THANK:** Cryo**CRAP-O-METER:**

The back of the box has pictures resembling something of a platform game, but it's anything but. Terrible, responsiveness, horribly chunky characters, and appallingly uninspired level designs made this game unplayable.

**Offender:** Formula 1 '98**WHO TO THANK:** Psygnosis**CRAP-O-METER:**

The success of F1 '97 must have gotten to the developers' heads, because this game was absolutely impossible to play.

**Offender:** Nagano Olympics '98**WHO TO THANK:** Konami**CRAP-O-METER:**

Released to build on the hype of the Winter Olympics, this game amounted to being a collection of smaller, unrelated, but equally poor mini-games based on sports involving ice.

**Offender:** Ninja**WHO TO THANK:** Eidos**CRAP-O-METER:**

At best, it was a dodgy scrolling beat-em up. However, being released at the same time as Tenchu: Stealth Assassins showed the game for what a stereotypical pile of fluff the game was.

**Offender:** The X-Files**WHO TO THANK:** Sony Computer Entertainment**CRAP-O-METER:**

The potential was there for a Resident Evil-style game. They turned it into a text-based adventure that didn't resemble the show at all.

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HelpStation

MISS NURSE WANTS YOU!

Can't find the magic glowing rabbit to get past the third squid boss in the underwater city? Stuck in the boiler room of the old factory? Do you require some level skip codes and invincibility cheats to feel like a real PlayStation success? Write to Ms Nurse. She may just help you!



WRITE TO: MISS NURSE
Level 6, 418a Elizabeth St
Surry Hills NSW Australia 2010
Email: playstation@next.com.au

ARMY MEN AIR ATTACK

ALL CO-PILOTS

In the passwords screen type Up, Down, Up, Down, Up, Down, Up, Down.

PASSWORDS

- MISSION 2:** Going Car-Razy
X, Down, Left (x2), □, O (x2), Right.
MISSION 3: The Train that Could
Δ, Up, Left, Right, Down, Δ, O, Up.
MISSION 4: Tan Terror Troy
Down (x2), □ (x2), Left, Right, O, X.
MISSION 5: Bug Bath
Right (x2), X, O, Down, Up, Down, Up.
MISSION 6: Uninvited Guests
□, O, X, □, Δ, Left, Up, Right.
MISSION 7: Ant in the Pants
□, O, X, □, Left, Up, Right.
MISSION 8: Saucer Attack
Right, Down, Left, Up, Δ, Down, Up, Down.
MISSION 9: The Heat Is On
O (x2), Right, Up, Right, Up, X (x2).
MISSION 10: The Melting Pot
X, Down (x4), X, Left, Right.
MISSION 11: River Rapids Riot
Δ, Up, O, Down, □, X, Right.

ARMY MEN AIR ATTACK



GRANDIA



- MISSION 12:** Nightmare Teddy
Up (x2), Δ (x2), Left (x2), O (x2).
MISSION 13: Demolition Time
Left, Down, Left, Down, □, O, □, O.
MISSION 14: Pick Up the Pieces
Down (x4), X (x2), O (x2).
MISSION 15: Have an Ice Day
□, Right, Left, O (x2), Up, Down, □.
MISSION 16: Plastro's Revenge
Down, Up, Down, Up, O, Δ, O, Δ.

UNLOCK ALL HELICOPTERS IN 2-PLAYER MODE

To get all of the helicopter in 2 player you must first go to the cheat code menu and enter Down, Down, Down, Down, X, X, O, O.

CENTIPEDE

CHEAT MODE

To activate cheat mode, pause the game and press: L1 (x2), L2, L1, Start. After, invincibility is enabled when the player has an odd number of lives.

Note: For an extra life, pause the game and press the d-pad Right.

GRANDIA

EASY LEVEL UP FOR WATER MAGIC

If you reach a save point don't recover right away. Take any character with water

magic and spend all of their MP casting healing spells. This will give you Water magic experience points. Then step on the save point and recover. This way you get water experience, but recover the MP.

OR

Near the entrance to the Dio ruins there is a save point very close to a wall trap. Run into the trap and heal yourself with water magic as long as you like. You can get very high magic levels very quickly.

HIDDEN MISSION

To access a bonus stage, go to the Zil Dessert on Disc 2. In the southern part of the desert, there should be a path in the canyon wall that leads to the castle of dreams. (If you still cannot find it, go south from the desert's exit along the wall.) This area is just a place to gain exp and obtain the great Lightning sword.



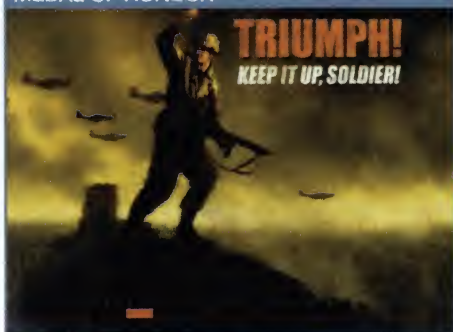
HelpStation

MEDAL OF HONOR

Cheat enabling passwords - The Enigma machine will flash green to signal their correct entry:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| CAPTAINDYE | Your health will stay the same from one mission to the next |
| SPRECHEN | Everyone speaks English |
| ICOSIDODEC | Quadruples your rate of fire |
| GOBLUE | Reflecting shots |
| TRACERON | Wire frame mode |
| BEACHBALL | Enable Noah in multiplayer |
| WOOFWOOF | Enable Bismark in multiplayer |
| BIGFATMAN | Enable Col. Muller in multiplayer |
| GUNTHER | Enable Gunther in multiplayer |
| HERRZOMBIE | Enable Otto in multiplayer |
| SSPIELBERG | Enable Velociraptor in multiplayer |
| ROCKETMAN | Enable von Braun in multiplayer |
| PAYBACK | Enable Shakespeare in multiplayer |
| FINESTHOUR | Enable Churchill in multiplayer |
| HOODUP | Enable Wolfgang in multiplayer |
| URLINGAMBE | To get all of the codes, multi player characters, FMV sequences, and levels |

MEDAL OF HONOUR



MEDAL OF HONOUR



These passwords only work when you complete a mission and then replay it:

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| BADCOPSHOW | Infinite ammunition |
| MOSTMEDALS | Invincibility |

LEVEL PASSWORDS

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| RETTUNG | Completes the 1st mission |
| ZERSIOREN | Completes the 2nd mission |
| BOOTSINKT | Completes the 3rd mission |
| SENFAS | Completes the 4th mission |
| SCHWERES | Completes the 5th mission |
| SICHERUNG | Completes the 6th mission |
| EINSICKERN | Completes the 7th mission |
| GESAMTHEIT | Completes the 8th mission |

DEFEAT FREEZE ATTACK

While playing against the dreamshades in the virtual reality hidden dungeon, they will try to freeze you so the other people will kill you... not a good thing. To have the effects wear off of you, all you have to do is to bring up the item screen or push O and wait for the effects to wear off.

HISTORY AND MAKING OF EACH LEVEL

Use these passwords to unlock the history and making features of all the levels under the "Gallery" option. If you entered the code correctly, the Enigma machine will flash green:

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Invasion | Level 1 |
| biggreta | Level 2 |
| dasboot | Level 3 |
| stuka | Level 4 |
| Komet | Level 5 |
| twosixtwo | Level 6 and 7 |
| Victory Day | Level 8 |

KILL YOURSELF

Press R1, R2, L2, R1, R1, R1, R2, L2, L1 then press

□ quickly. Your player should blow up and say, "What did you do that for?"

NIFTY MULTIPLAYER POWER-UPS

In order to get the first medal and a cheat option beat the first three levels with a three-star rating OR enter: DENNISMODE at the password screen. To get a powerup in multiplayer, kill your opponent and pick-up the box right next to the dead body. If you didn't turn on the cheat, this should be a player ammo box. However, if the cheat is on you'll get one of the following: (Note: The powerup affects you or your opponent and it doesn't matter who picks it up. I will refer the person being affected as the victim. Each powerup that lasts will last for about 45 to 50s.)

BLK (Blink) Every time the victim tries to reload, the victim will transport a pre-set location.

DMX (4x Damage) The victim's fire power will be increased by four folds.

REV (Reverse controls) The victim's controls will be reversed. Left will be right, and up will be down.

FRZ (Frozen) The victim can not move forward or backward or sideways. The victim can only look up and down and left or right.



HelpStation

SLW (Slow) The victim's movement will slow down by almost 4 times. When the victim crouches, the victim can only move a few inches.

DMD (Half-damage) The victim's damage will decrease by two folds.

RFL (Reflecting shot) The victim's bullet will reflect off walls, ground, and ceilings.

SWP (Swap ammo) The victim's opponent's ammo will be given to the victim. However, the opponent will still keep the same amount of ammo and only the victim's ammo will increase.

AIR (Air hanging) When the victim jumps, the victim stays in the air for a while longer than normal. This is good for making long jumps from roof to roof.

MEDIEVIL

CHEAT MENU

Pause the game, hold L2 and press Down, Up, □, △, O, Down, Up, □, △ (DUST TO DUST).

SUPER CHEAT MENU

Pause the game, then hold L2 and press △, O, △, O, O, △, Left, O, Up, Down, Right, O, Left, Left, △, Right, O, Left, Left, △, O, Down, O, O, Right. (To toot loud, roll troll to door.)

MEDIEVIL



NBA LIVE 2000

UNLOCK ANDREW PHILLIP

Beat a team in rookie mode in an exhibition by 10 or more points and you will unlock 50's star Andrew Phillip.

UNLOCK ISAIAH THOMAS

Get 15 steals in superstar mode to unlock him in your roster!

UNLOCK LARRY BIRD

To unlock Larry Bird, Play 3 point shoot-out and score at least 20 points with the difficulty set to Superstar.

UNLOCK LEGENDS

When you are picking a team enter: Up, Down, O, and □. An all-star team with the greatest NBA players of all time will appear and you can play as them in a single game or season.

UNLOCK MICHAEL JORDAN

Defeat Michael Jordan one-on-one in superstar to unlock him on the roster.

UNLOCK RICHARD GUERIN FROM 50'S ALL-STARS

Defeat the 3 point shootout in the rookie mode.

SUPERCROSS 2000



POOL HUSTLER

BOWLLIARDS MODE

At the title screen when the words "Press Start" are flashing, press Up, Up, Down, Down, △, △, X, X, Left, Right, □, O. You will hear a signal to confirm correct entry. You will find a new option called "Bowlliards" at the main menu. It's a billiards games scored like bowling.

SPYRO 2

GET THE PLAYABLE DEMO OF CRASH TEAM RACING

To play the demo of Crash Team Racing, at the part where it has the title and says "press start" press and hold L1 and R2 and while doing that press the □ button simultaneously.

Note: You will have to restart your PlayStation when you don't want to play anymore.

GET THE UNTIMED HOCKEY GAMES THAT ARE IN COLOSSUS

When you are at the colossus in the summer forest, get to the hockey stage. If you leave the arena and you go back in the game it will be untimed but you only get one chance and then the puck disappears. If you beat the goalie then you will go to two player mode. At this point leave again and then return. The puck never disappears and it's untimed!

SUPERCROSS 2000

While in the air, hold O and press the d-pad in the following directions to execute a stunt.

STUNT

Bonzai
Can Can
Cliff Hanger
Cordova
"Nothing"
Rear Fender grab
Saran Wrap
Side Heel Click
Superman
Superman Fender grab
Vertical Fender grab

CODE

Left, Right
Down, Right, Up
Right, Down, Left
Left, Up, Right
Right, Up, Left
Up, Down
Up, Right, Down
Down, Left, Up
Left, Down, Right
Up, Left, Down
Down, Up

HelpStation

TARZAN

CHEAT MENU

Enter the level select code. Enter the "Cheat" menu and enter: L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1, L2, R2. You should hear a confirmation sound. Pick the level you wish to play and press X. During gameplay press pause. The Cheat Menu will now be open.

LEVEL SELECT

At the main Menu enter Left, Left, Right, Right, Up, Down, Left, Right, Up, Up, Down, Down and scroll down past "load game" and an option called "cheats" will appear. Select it with X and choose your level. Extra levels can be found by pressing Right.

TOY STORY 2

DEBUG MODE

At the title screen press X, O, □.

OUTRUN THE RC CAR

In the second level, Andy's Neighborhood, you can defeat RC without the jet boots. Here is how: Every time the RC car attempts to pass you by, simply stand in front of it and wait for it to collide with you. It will stop for a short time. Keep running along and run into him at all costs. Be sure not to land in the cement mixture. You can repeat this process to get the Pizza Planet Coin.

REPLENISH HEALTH

When your health is gone, quickly exit the level then return to it and you should be invincible.

WCW MAYHEM

Enter the following codes as Pay-Per-View passwords to activate their respective benefits:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| PLYHDNGYS | All Wrestlers. |
| NGGDYNLN | Alternate Wrestlers. |
| PLYNTRCLSC | Classic TNT Nitro set. (Choose "Nitro" at the ring selection screen) |
| DPLNGGRS | Identical Wrestlers. (Cheat works in 2P VS mode games only) |
| MSKDLTRY | Masked Rey Mysterio Jr. |
| PRNTMMNTM | Momentum meter . |
| PRNTSTMN | Stamina meter. |
| CHT4DBST | Push Right in "Quest for the Best mode" to advance in rank |
| MKSPRCWS | Unlimited attribute points: Created wrestlers may now have their attributes set to full |
| NGGDYNLN | Cheat unlocks obese versions of Billy Kidman, Alex Wright, Steve Ray, and Kid Wrath. |
| "@KcXKF=W?j^pF | Wrestle the exact same match card as in the actual event |
| yKh#J\$=JQLmFs | Mayhem (Pay-Per-View event) |
| CBCKRMS | Unlocks all backstage arenas. Choose the one you wish to fight in by selecting "Match Options" at Match Setup screen. |

SPYRO 2



WU TANG - TASTE THE PAIN



(To fight backstage, wrestlers must leave the ring and make their way towards the entrance.)

THURSDAY THUNDER

(THE PAY-PER-VIEW EVENT)

Enter "PLYHDNGYS" as a Pay-Per-View password on the top line. Push X. Enter "MSKDLTRY" as a pay-per-view password on the middle line. Matches include Goldberg in a four-way bout and K-Dog in a two-against-one.

WU TANG - TASTE THE PAIN

SECRET RZA CHARACTER

At versus mode, while choosing the RZA, press and hold select and then press X to select him. When you begin to fight you should notice a character named "Fearmentor".

SECRETS GAME MODE - ONE PLAYER VERSUS

To use the secret game modes in one player, select the game mode you want from the secrets menu. Then select versus mode from the main menu. When you select the level you want to play on hold down R1 and R2 at the same time. Do this until you hear a confirmation sound, then release.

WU-TANG "SONGS"

The game disc has been mastered so you can enjoy the music from the game in a normal CD player.



BUYER'S GUIDE

Station Magazine has formed the Buyer's Guide to give you, the reader, an idea about the games that have been released over recent months. Use this as a guide when buying your PlayStation software.



360

PUBLISHER: Cryo
GENRE: Futuristic Racing
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 6

An average racing game about futuristic vessels whipping up a wet storm along river circuits. Reminiscent of WipeOut with its colours and weaponry.

A BUGS LIFE

PUBLISHER: Disney Interactive
GENRE: Platforms
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 7

Quite a charming little platform title, whose visuals are strikingly faithful to those of the movie. A tad simple for the more experienced gamers, but it's ideal for the littlies.

ACE COMBAT 3

PUBLISHER: Namco
GENRE: Flight Sim
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 8

One of the only decent flight sims available on the PlayStation, with incredible graphics and excellent dog-fighting action. Pity it's a bit easy...

AFL '99

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Sports
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 7

Uses an interesting graphics technique whereby the players have polygonal torsos and sprites for limbs. The poor frame rate lets it down.

AIRONAUTS

PUBLISHER: Jack of all Games
GENRE: Flying Gameshow
PRICE: A\$69.95/NZ\$119.95
SCORE: 3

You play a criminal trying to redeem yourself by risking your life in an aeronautic arena. Avoid.

AKUJI THE HEARTLESS

PUBLISHER: Eidos Interactive
GENRE: Adventure
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 7

A decent mixture of platforming fun, chilling plot, and Lara-style puzzles. The game is quite reminiscent of Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver, only it's not executed quite as well.

ANNA KOURNIKOVA

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Tennis
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$69.95
SCORE: 8

A deep tennis game with all the charm and playability of the first Smash Court. Cute characters and amusing animations breathe life into the stale genre of videogame tennis. Sports fans should be wary that the game is entirely cartoony, and not realistic.

APE ESCAPE

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: 3D Platform
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$79.95
SCORE: 10

A superb adventure for younger gamers, or anyone with an itch to go catch some monkeys. The first game to be exclusively used with a Dual Shock controller, it isn't even compatible with a standard controller at all. Colourful, action-packed and huge, Ape Escape will enchant all ages.

APOCALYPSE

PUBLISHER: Activision
GENRE: Platforms
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 7

An average sci-fi action shooter for most people, this game is also the most decent Robotron revival in recent history. It's got excellent graphics, excellent sounds, great sound effects - it's a recipe for a blockbuster game, only it's let down by the loose controls. Fans of Robotron and Bruce Willis (the star of the game) should check it out.

BEAST WARS

PUBLISHER: Hasbro
GENRE: Action
PRICE: A\$69.95/NZ\$119.95
SCORE: 3

Transformers the cartoon ruled. Transformers the Movie ruled. Beast Wars was a questionable spin-off, but it was fine. The game, however, plays like a dog. No wild robot shoot-outs like in Ghost in the Shell or anything - just platforms. There is no justice.

BUGS BUNNY

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: 3D Platform
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 6

Everyone's favourite wabbit stars in his own 3D platform title. Bugs looks surprisingly round for a polygonal character. It's not a bad game, but it's simplistic for veterans of the genre. Recommended for younger players.

BUST A GROOVE

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Dancing
PRICE: A\$69.95/NZ\$79.95
SCORE: 8

THE dancing title for your PlayStation. Your head will swim at the sight of the silky smooth graphics and your booty will bounce to the beat of the tunes. Two dance contestants take the stage and try to out-boogie each other with timing and skill. It is guaranteed to please any crowd, or even a small gaggle. If you can find it, buy it, for it is no longer in production.

CARMAGEDDON

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Driving
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$109.95
SCORE: 8

A mighty fine conversion it is. Not for the squeamish, this game is filled with zombies, dismemberments, gore-filled car accidents, and a hapless wee lamb named Fifi who survives the destruction. Carmageddon is definitely for lovers of wild destruction and mayhem.

CRASH BANDICOOT 3

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: 3D platform
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 10

The best reached a glorious climax with this beautiful game. Go scuba diving, fly an aeroplane, ride the tiger, hoon on a motorbike, pilot a spaceship and surf on a jetski! Crash Bandicoot: Warped is a platforming experience not to be missed by anyone. An absolute must for any platformer fan.

CRASH TEAM RACING

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Kart racing
PRICE: A\$69.95/NZ\$79.95
SCORE: 10

A perfect MarioKart clone, CTR takes the silly karting genre to new heights of excellence with crazy weapons and wacky characters. Multitap compatible for four player fun.

DEMOLITION RACER

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Destructive driving
PRICE: A\$59.95/NZ\$69.95
SCORE: 4

An enjoyable yet ugly game about cars, with equal emphasis on racing them and thn smashing them. Features the destruction derby bowl right out of Destruction Derby 1 & 2, plus many racing tracks and modes.

DINO CRISIS

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Horror
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

Jurassic Park meets Resident Evil. Play the curvaceous special forces babe Regina as you investigate an island research base where re-gened dinosaurs have run amok. Sharp graphics and a lingering sensation of menace make it the best game of its kind yet seen.

DRIVER

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Driving
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 9

Think GTA, except in first person. This game puts you in the shoes of an undercover cop, and your missions involve high speed chases, bank robberies, getaways, and other forms of motor-head malarkey through the streets of America. A satisfying game in every respect.

DUNE 2000

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Real Time Strategy
PRICE: A\$69.95/NZ\$79.95
SCORE: 8

Differs from the PC version in that it's fully polygonal, and suffers a number of minor hiccups as a result. Not a bad alternative to C&C Retaliation or Warzone 2100, but still an excellent strategy game if you're looking for one.

EVERYBODY'S GOLF 2

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Golf
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 7

Worthy of a higher score for pure gameplay, but it was lowered due to the fact that it is almost identical to EG1. Cute, very playable and great for parties. One of the most underrated series of all time.

EHRGEIZ

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: 3D fighting
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 9

Concocted in the minds of the best developers in Square and Namco, Ehrgeiz is the most advanced and complicated 3D fighting game ever made. Features a full RPG mode and several mini-games. Just brilliant.

FIFA 2000

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Soccer
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 10

The absolute best soccer game of all time just got better. Superb lighting effects top the list of this year's improvements, with a superior framerate and higher polygon count adding to the joy. Look at this game for a nanosecond before buying.

FINAL FANTASY VIII

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Epic RPG
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 10

A better game than FFXII in every way, apart from the low-res battle backgrounds. With turn-based combat, hours of the world's best FMV and a never-ending plotline, this is a game that will hold any player still for months, if not years. Comes in 4-CDs, making it the biggest game on the PlayStation we've ever seen!

FORMULA 1 99

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
GENRE: Racing
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 9

One of the best formula 1 simulations you'll find. Forget the horror of last year's installment: this game brings the series back to its former glory. Let the rubber burn.

FORTY WINKS

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Platform
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$89.95
SCORE: 6

A vaguely original platform game in which two children must search a number of dream realms to find the forty winks. Some nice ideas, but there are so many of these games anyway. And why oh why does the PlayStation version lack the co-operative mode while the N64 does not?

G POLICE 2

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Flying Shooter
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 6

In the dark, distant future crime is way out of control. G-Police 2 improves on the formula employed by the first game, with more weapons and vehicles to pilot, yet fails to offer either anything new, or a particularly rewarding experience.

GRAN TURISMO 2

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Racing
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 9

The PlayStation's flagship racing title. Interestingly, the graphics in Gran Turismo 1 look better. However, this sequel offers more cars and tracks, making it a worthy enough sequel for anyone who's into racing.

GRAND THEFT AUTO 2

PUBLISHER: Take2 Interactive
GENRE: Criminal Acts
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$59.95
SCORE: 9

A splendid sequel that carries through Grand Theft Auto's tradition of ignoring the law in a big city. Plenty of "you're nicked," and "cor blimey!" type language to suit the times plus the odd murder, kill frenzy and hit and run. Playing various bosses against each other is also a great new feature in game.

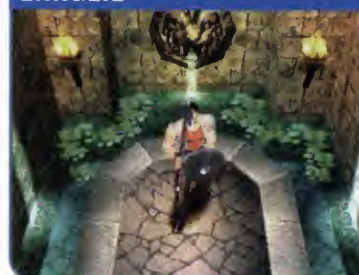
DEMOLITION RACER



DUNE 2000



EHRGEIZ



FINAL FANTASY VIII



FORMULA 1 '99



GRAND THEFT AUTO 2



GRANDIA



GRANDIA

PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft
GENRE: RPG
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$59.95
SCORE: 8

If you don't get Final Fantasy VIII, get Grandia. It's very old school, very classy, highly imaginative, and it's got some of the best 2D artwork on the PlayStation. It's a pity it came out so late, but it's a fantastic RPG for the traditional fans out there. Better late than never.

GUNGAGE



GUNGAGE

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: 3D Shooter
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 7

Run around in chunky environments blasting all that moves and many things that don't. An appreciable game for shoot-em-up devotees with some truly imaginative boss characters, but not for most people.

JET RIDER 3



INTELLEVISION CLASSICS

PUBLISHER: Activision
GENRE: Retro games
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 6

A collection of thirty-odd games from the old Intellelevision console. Includes interviews with developers. Retro heads will love this title to death, but everyone else would just use the game as an expensive coaster.

MTV SNOWBOARDING



JET RIDER 3

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Jetski Racing
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 4

The third Jet Rider in the series is almost identical to the first two: you race over all manner of surface, pulling off big stunts and using the electromagnetic poles to corner sharply. Colourful fun, sadly with a poor framerate and really dodgy controls. Can be fun, but ultimately becomes frustrating.

MUSIC 2000



KINGSLEY

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: 3D platform
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$119.95
SCORE: 3

Kingsley is Psygnosis' absolute worst game to date. Usually they are reliable developers but this really proves that platformers are not their forte. Everyone is better off trying Spyro 2 or even Toy Story 2.

NBA LIVE 2000



KURUSHI FINAL

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Puzzle
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$69.95
SCORE: 8

This is arguably one of the toughest puzzle games ever conceived on the PlayStation. If you loved the challenge of Devil Dice, or are a puzzle fan anyway, make this game your next stop. Very stylish and it supports two players.

LEGEND OF LEGAIA

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: RPG
PRICE: A\$69.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

Legaia is a traditional RPG, programmed entirely in 3D. Its strong point is the tireless battle system which involves fists and feet as much as weapons and spells. Not exactly in the same vein as the Final Fantasy series, but definitely a thoroughly entertaining piece of work.

LEGEND OF KARTIA

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Strategy
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 8

A fantastic title for anyone who loved Vandal Hearts. It's a traditional turn-based strategy game with a wonderful storyline and excellent graphical effects. Some of us think it's better than Final Fantasy Tactics!

METAL GEAR SOLID

PUBLISHER: Konami
GENRE: Tactical Action
PRICE: A\$99.95/NZ\$119.95
SCORE: 10

Probably the PlayStation's biggest name yet, Metal Gear Solid is subtitled "Tactical Espionage Action", and it is just that. The graphics are a bit blocky, but the incredible cinematics and control systems are all very worthwhile. No PlayStation owner should miss out on this, or the Special Missions Disc.

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Action/Espionage
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 8

Slightly better than its N64 counterpart, MI features fake face skins that made the TV show so good. For running around doing missions, this is above average, but for fans, it's the closest you'll get to the real thing.

MONACO GP 2

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
GENRE: Driving
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

One of the best Formula 1 racing games available for PlayStation, MGP2 offers an excellent mix of graphics, sound and realistic gameplay that features an arcade mode for the beginners and simulation mode for the experts. This game comes very highly recommended.

MONKEY HERO

PUBLISHER: Take 2
GENRE: RPG
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 4

Monkey Hero should be given credit for trying to revitalise some interest in traditional 2D RPGs, but this game does more damage to the genre than actually helping it. With its strict linearity and simple puzzles, this is a game that would only suit younger players. Mature gamers are best advised to avoid it.

MTV SNOWBOARDING

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Snowboarding
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 4

Another questionable snowboarding title to add to the growing pile. Thing is, it sucks. Badly. Don't touch it unless a gun's pointed at your head.

MUSIC 2000

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Music application
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

Not a game; a music maker. Sample your own sounds off any music CD - yes, using your PlayStation - and mix them into your own custom designed beat. A complete sound studio that no budding DJ should miss.

NBA LIVE 2000

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Basketball
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$69.95
SCORE: 9

NBA Live 2000 continues EA Sports' tradition of churning out the best sports sims in the market. It has the graphics, the motion, the stats, and now finally the addition of Michael Jordan, all packed into the game. NBA Live 2000 is the most comprehensive basketball sim on the PlayStation... again.

NHL 2000

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Ice Hockey
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$69.95
SCORE: 9

Simply the best in ice hockey, simply because of the Hit button, used to initiate violence in the rink. Great graphics and framerate; rich statistical data - this is the kind of game all hockey fans flock to.

NO FEAR BIKING

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Downhill cycling
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 8

The first game to take cycling seriously does a very good job. The handling and feel are substantially different to the physics of a car game. Overall, an oddly relaxing game with oodles of strategy, stunts and speed. And it comes with Hillous' personal seal of approval!

PAC MAN WORLD

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: 3D platform
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$129.95
SCORE: 5

Alas, poor Pacman, we knew him well. Now he is fashionably 3D, making him the star of a mediocre platform game. On the other hand, the retro-heads seem to really like the game. Check it out, if you can be bothered.

POPULOUS

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Strategy
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 8

Get to play God in this 3D civilisation simulation. It remains much the same as all of the other Populous titles were before this, but is tweaked in the name of PlayStation playability. Everything is 3D, for example, which might be considered good...

POY POY 2

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Party Game
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$119.95
SCORE: 8

With a multitap this game can't be beat. All you have to do is throw some rocks and other dangerous articles at your varied competitors in a small arena. That's basically the aim of the game! There is a good sense of humour in this that makes for a great fun game.

RAINBOW 6

PUBLISHER: Jack of all Games
GENRE: Action/Espionage
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

Rainbow 6 is an excellent spy-like thriller that will require more than just gunpowder to play. Smart enemies and a team of many to commandeer makes it a winner over the likes of Quake 2.

READY 2 RUMBLE

PUBLISHER: Playcorp
GENRE: Boxing
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 8

The most accessible boxing game for PlayStation yet. Immemorable titles include Knock Out Kings and Victory Boxing - Ready 2 Rumble blows them out of the water, but the graphics are still a bit patchy. It's the best boxing game since Mike Tyson's Punch Out on the NES... no ear biting please!

RIDGE RACER TYPE 4

PUBLISHER: Namco
GENRE: Driving
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$89.95
SCORE: 8

On one hand, the game's physics and mechanics are well executed through the JogCon. On the other hand, Ridge Racer Type 4 is far too easy to sustain any challenge. Should have been a 10, but it let is down.

RONIN BLADE

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Action/adventure
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$89.95
SCORE: 9

A story of a ronin samurai and female ninja with various Resident Evil-esque backdrops. Lovely graphics, good storyline. Features a battle system with customisable combos, but more importantly the dynamic sex appeal that made The X Files such a hit.

RUGRATS

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Multi-format
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$109.95
SCORE: 7

Rugrats is possibly the best choice around at the moment for the young gamers. It also features a variety of different minigames that are simple and enjoyable as well. The game is presented colourfully and is hugely enjoyable as long as you are young at heart.

SAGA FRONTIER 2

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: RPG
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

Squaresoft's RPGs have finally made it to our local shores, albeit a tad belated. SaGa Frontier 2 represents the first of a new generation of "traditional 2D RPGs" in that the game is presented entirely in water-colours. Not a bad title, if not just for the graphics.

SHADOW MADNESS

PUBLISHER: Crave
GENRE: RPG
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 7

A competent RPG from America to rival the likes of the best of Japan. The cool battle system makes it worthwhile, but it's really hard to look past what a blatant rip off it is of the vastly superior Final Fantasy series.

SHAO LIN

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Fighting sim
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$119.95
SCORE: 5

A confused title that doesn't know whether it's a fighting sim or an RPG adventure in feudal China. Lack of a decent plot relegates it to the former. Supports up to eight players at once with a multitap.

SILENT HILL

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
GENRE: Horror Adventure
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$109.95
SCORE: 8

A truly petrifying thriller with astounding cinematography. It is let down by its weak characters, sometimes too dark settings and lack of plot direction. Still, it is guaranteed to deliver many shivers for those who really want to wet their pants. This is true intelligent horror.

SILICON VALLEY

PUBLISHER: Jack of all Games
GENRE: 3D Platformer
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

This free-roamer is made compelling by its novel idea of letting you control any of a huge number of different droids on a space hulk. Puzzles and exploration, sheep on springs, dogs with rockets, and lethal polar bears keep the interest high in this cartoony update of Paradroid.



SMURFS

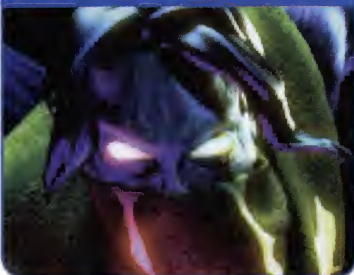


SMURFS

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Platform
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 7

A standard platform game that pretends to be 3D but isn't, resulting in blocky graphics and a linear game. The reputation is what will sell the game, but most people would probably prefer a game like Klonoa or Pandemonium - assuming you can still find games that old.

SOUL REAVER



SOUL REAVER

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: 3D RPG/Adventure
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$109.95
SCORE: 9

In this gothic tale of the supernatural you play an ex-vampire turned soul reaver. Brooding and extremely well-spoken, this game is huge, with superlative graphics and a cool story. Even the loading screens are disguised as eerie cinematic sequences.

THRASHER



SPACE INVADERS

PUBLISHER: Activision
GENRE: Shooting
PRICE: A\$69.95/NZ\$89.95
SCORE: 5

The addition of two player mode and special weapons save the game, but the bosses still suck. Naturally, it is in pseudo 3D. If you finish the whole thing you unlock the original version, which was obviously a move to assure the "real" game would be played at all.

WIP3OUT



SYPHON FILTER

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Tactical Espionage
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ TBA
SCORE: 9

Syphon Filter is the game for all you guys left wanting more after Metal Gear Solid. It's viewed over the shoulder, like Tomb Raider, but it has much better controls and heaps of weaponry to play with. Great espionage action.

WORMS ARMAGEDDON



THRASHER

PUBLISHER: Jack of All Games
GENRE: Skateboarding
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ TBA
SCORE: 8

Call it the intelligent gamer's skateboarding game. Thrasher: Skate and Destroy focuses on collisions, body physics, and other game-deepening aspects of being a pro skater. Doesn't have the cool flashy tricks like Tony Hawk, though.

TOMB RAIDER IV

PUBLISHER: Eidos
GENRE: 3D Platform
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$119.95
SCORE: 9

The latest and greatest adventure starring Lara Croft, this game goes back to basics by providing smarter graphics, smarter level designs, and a training mode where you get to see Lara in her sumptuous youth as a 16 year old. Don't miss it!

TONY HAWK

PUBLISHER: Activision
GENRE: Skateboarding
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 10

Superb, sublime, exquisite, exemplary, amazing, astounding, enthralling and excellent. Tony Hawk supervised the creation of this fine game and the results bring tears to the eyes. You'll be olying into seventh heaven. Vast environments, superlative graphics, and the soundtrack could have been taken from any thrasher's walkman. Hours of bliss.

TRIPLE PLAY 2000

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Baseball
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 8

Terrific graphics and splendid gameplay make Triple Play 2000 the only choice for you if you want to add a baseball sim to your PlayStation collection.

UM JAMMER LAMMY

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Rhythm/Dance
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 9

The splendid sequel to Parappa has more than thrice the songs, plus extra modes for two player rapping and jamming action. Unfortunately the PAL release was slightly edited due to dangerous references to death and philosophy, but it still maintains its spontaneous Japanese style. If you never discovered Parappa, go out and discover Lammy now.

V RALLY 2

PUBLISHER: Ozisoft
GENRE: Rally Racing
PRICE: A\$89.95/NZ\$99.95
SCORE: 10

The fastest rally racer on the PSX, VR2 creams Colin McRae, Rally Cross and its own prequel. A comprehensive track editor adds countless circuits to the already whopping 92 available, and there

are all the upgrade and set-up options you could shake an oil stick at. Even the four player split screen mode works as smooth as Cassanova Frankenstein.

WIP3OUT

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Futuristic
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$89.95
SCORE: 8

Much flatter, greyer, smoother but some might say not as much fun. The only thing that makes it worth buying over 2097 is the split-screen and link-up options. Wip3out's frame rate is exceptionally smooth, even in the multiplayer races. The soundtrack is the traditional hardcore techno, now more trancey and consistent than before.

WORMS ARMAGEDDON

PUBLISHER: OziSoft
GENRE: Artillery
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 10

You and your army of worms must blow up the armies of other worms with a hilarious array of weapons straight out of a Bugs Bunny cartoon. Quite simply, the best multiplayer game on the PlayStation.

WU TANG

PUBLISHER: Activision
GENRE: 4-player fighting
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 7

A terribly lack-lustre fighting title whose only merit worth boasting about is the 4-player mode. Fans of the hip-hop group will enjoy the music, though.

XENA

PUBLISHER: EA
GENRE: Action/Adventure
PRICE: A\$TBA/NZ\$TBA
SCORE: 8

Not unlike Tomb Raider, or Tenchu, this third-person action game pits you as Xena against an army of leather-clad nasties. Not really an amazing game, but is lots of medieval fun.

X-FILES

PUBLISHER: Sony
GENRE: Investigative adventure
PRICE: A\$79.95/NZ\$109.95
SCORE: 6

A sometimes slow game based on video sequences, starring Scully, Mulder and many other characters from the TV show. Was written and produced by the main man Chris Carter.



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the CRITICS' CIRCLE

This is where the Station crew takes a serious look at the problems in the world of PlayStation. The Critic's Circle is a forum where we discuss issues that affect your enjoyment in PlayStation gaming. This month, the topic for discussion is "Videogames: Art Vs Commerce".

Even though you see a "100%" at the end of the game, you haven't really enjoyed all that Gran Turismo 2 was meant to offer. Reason? The developers ran out of time, and they had to cut out a few tracks. In fact, if you play the game in Japan or America, the best you'll ever get is 98.6%. They only changed the numbers around for our local release so we couldn't tell. The result was a game that 'could' have been better, but wasn't.

Videogames are a national recreation. They have touched practically everyone's lives. Anyone who's played a game knows how fondly we reminisce on their creative beauty; and they know how excited we can become as we anticipate the release of the next blockbuster. Yet for the people who bring us this joy, videogames are big business. There's money to be made. And when push comes to



shove, developers have to ensure that they satisfy their commercial interests. What it means is shortcuts might have to be taken in the production of a game. Levels will be missing. The graphics won't look as impressive. Handling and control won't be as tight. And you, the consumer, are paying money for it.

This doesn't mean developers are evil in any way. They know that they've got fans to please and most of them do strive for the best. It's just that when profit margins and deadlines enter the equation, they have no choice but to follow orders.

Thankfully, there are the odd few who are willing to delay the release of a game until it's perfect. For the consumers, it means some hefty delays (and no games to play) or unimaginable disappointment. In a perfect world, games would come out on time and be programmed properly.

Maybe they would if unrealistic deadlines weren't placed on them...

UNFINISHED AND IMPERFECT. CAN YOU TELL?

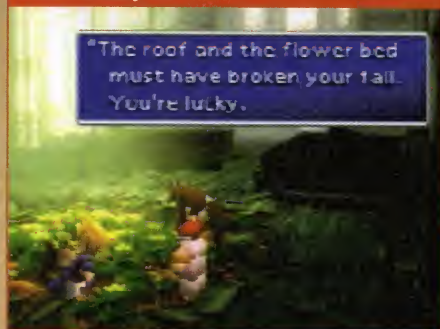
GRAN TURISMO 2

The Japanese code for Gran Turismo 2 was originally delayed until at least a February 2000 release, but in a rather bizarre chain of events, it was released several days before Christmas 1999. Unfortunately, the drag racing tracks had to be cut out, and there is absolutely no way to make proper use of the drag racing cars that can be unlocked. S-m-a-r-t.

Gran Turismo 2



Final Fantasy VII



FINAL FANTASY VII

Final Fantasy VII was not a complete game. In fact, there are numerous plot flaws and threads of story that just begged for closure. This is partially why the ending FMV caused so much confusion. Amongst other things, the most important exclusion from the game was the ability to resurrect Aeris in the garden where you first met her.

PERFECT DARK - N64

Here's a peek at what 'could' happen if the developers take perfection too much to heart. N64 fans have been holding their breath for this successor to GoldenEye for a long time. Something like 2 years. And what's been frustrating Nintendo fans even more is that the N64 software library doesn't have anywhere near the variety enjoyed by the PlayStation.

Perfect Dark - N64



KEVIN

It baffles me somewhat. The videogames industry is often said to be bigger than Hollywood, so it stands to reason the developers can shell out for more staff and more resources to achieve that sense of 'perfection'. Nobody likes a stingy business.

HILLOUS

Sadly, commerce always wins. Only in Japan do the great games all survive. Take Legend of Mana: the prettiest handpainted backdrops I've seen in any game and yet it won't be coming out here because it is deemed not financially viable enough.

JAMES

Ideally, art and commerce can only intersect when the creative team is small and focused. Doom was written by four people! For a blockbuster these days, you need a bureaucracy. With so many cooks, you can't help but spoil the broth.

NEXT EDITION



**TAKE A LOOK AT NEXT
MONTH'S ISSUE OF STATION!**

MEDIEVIL 2

Dead Sir Dan Fortesque is back for more tongue in cheek zombie slashing and hopefully some more slanderous verbal abuse from the ghosts of his peers. We'll take a close look at where the new Medieval is going and how it differs from the first.

SYNTHON FILTER 2

Pulled out of retirement yet again, to save the world from bomb-laden terrorists yet again, Gabriel Logan must be getting on a bit. However, he only goes from strength to strength in the virtual world and with any luck he'll have bigger guns this time too!

COLIN MCRAE 2

Those who recognise the name should not need to be told that this is a rally racer we're talking about, and despite GT2's efforts in the rally field, we suspect the next Colin will blow us all away anyway.

ALSO COMING NEXT MONTH:

Dukes of Hazzard, Duke Nukem: Planet of the Babes, Rayman 2, GTA2 Berlin, Alundra 2, Resident Evil: Gun Survivor, DVD Extra, musical fun, PlayStation 2, and more!

PLAYSTATION DEMO CD



Contrary to indications given on pages 6,7, 12 & 13, this issue of Station does not feature an interactive PlayStation demo CD. The planned CD (which has been a regular feature of the magazine since launch) was unavoidably and significantly delayed during its commissioning, testing and manufacturing process in Europe and it was regrettably therefore impossible to attach a CD to the magazine in time.

As a replacement, this new, lower priced issue carries an exclusive 64 page book featuring everything there is to know about Sony's smash-hit racer, Gran Turismo 2. Our resident team of expert drivers, instructors and clean-mouthed mechanics have undertaken the literary equivalent of the Paris-Dakar rally to bring you this fine tome. Whether you want to master the handling of the Viper, or upgrade your Impreza, this is the guide for you.

Happy power-sliding!

Kevin Cheung,
Editor

64 MASSIVE PAGES OF DRIVING HEAVEN

FREE

STATION

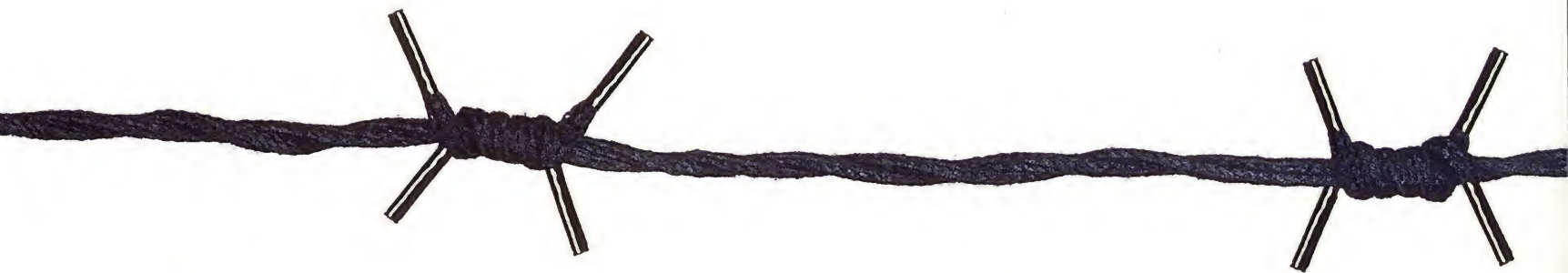
100% INDEPENDENT PLAYSTATION GAMING 11



GRAN2 TURISMO

Every car, every corner, and every upgradable part - become an unbeatable speed demon as we reveal all of the secrets of Gran Turismo 2

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DOING TIME



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